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THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

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BY

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PREFACE

THIS is an elementary book; it aims, above all, at making the story clear. Its other purpose, not less important, is to indicate the present state of the chief problems associated with the great Revolution. It is based mainly on the reading of Acton, Sorel, Aulard, Kropotkin, Belloc, and the writers of the "Cambridge Modern History"; but though in its preparation the use of original authorities has been supplementary—not to say decorative—it is hoped that the book will supply the particular readers for whom it is intended with something essentially differing from what they can get from the few excellent handbooks of similar size that exist. And if I have studied the subject intelligently, I can hardly fail, amid the multitude of suggestions inherent in so mighty a saga, to present aspects interesting to all who care for history.

My best thanks are due to the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press for permission to give in Appendix A an account of the Constitution of the States-General, abridged from that given in volume viii of the "Cambridge Modern History."

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Antecedents of the Revolution	1
II.	The Old Régime	16
III.	King and People	28
IV.	The States-General	40
V.	The Victory of the Commons	49
VI.	The Bastille	55
VII.	The Revolution in the Provinces	69
VIII.	The Assembly and the Constitution	75
IX.	Removal to Paris	85
X.	The Constituent in Paris	97
XI.	Mirabeau	111
XII.	Varennes and the Reaction	119
XIII.	The Constitution of 1791	127
XIV.	The Legislative and the New Parties	132
XV.	The War	136
XVI.	The Fall of the Monarchy	145
XVII.	The Invasion and the Massacre	158
XVIII.	Valmy	167
XIX.	The Convention	170
XX.	The End of Louis XVI	175
XXI.	The Fall of the Gironde	179
XXII.	Revolutionary Absolutism	189

CHAP.		PAGE
XXIII.	FOREIGN WAR IN 1793	193
XXIV.	CIVIL WAR IN 1793	197
XXV.	THE FIRST COMMITTEE AND DANTON	202
XXVI.	THE RULE OF THE GREAT COMMITTEE	205
XXVII.	MEMORABLE DEATHS	215
XXVIII.	THE TRIUMPH AND FALL OF HÉBERT	218
XXIX.	THE FALL OF DANTON	221
XXX.	THE PONTIFICATE AND FALL OF ROBESPIERRE	224
XXXI.	THE THERMIDORIAN REACTION	230
XXXII.	THE RESULTS OF THE REVOLUTION	234
	IMPORTANT DATES	239
	APPENDIX A. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATES-GENERAL	243
	„ B. THE REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR	245
	INDEX	247

	FACING PAGE
MAP OF PARIS, 1789–1790	246

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

ANTECEDENTS OF THE REVOLUTION

THERE are few subjects to compare in point of interest or importance with the French Revolution. Whether we consider it as the first considerable attempt in the history of the world to refound a great civilisation upon first principles, or as focusing the results of centuries of thought, or as provoking the widest of those vast wars in which ideas stalk behind the cannon upon fields where the past and the future bring their everlasting campaign to a crisis, not more than three or four of history's episodes can be compared with it.

Its causes included almost every division by which we classify human life. They were spiritual, economic, political; they owed much also to coincidence. An explanation has been offered by pointing out that the poverty of the many and the wickedness of rulers attained at length an insupportable height; the cry for justice was heard above, and there came down a gospel written in hell-fire

for the consuming of that mountainous evil. The truth is not so simple.

Yet this view suggests more of truth, probably, than it would be possible to put so briefly otherwise. It is literally true to say that the poor could no longer bear to pay nearly all the taxes, whilst the rich and the rulers were more profuse than they had been since the days of Nero in their expenditure upon pleasure and ambition. It has another advantage; it shows that the spiritual and economic elements in man are two aspects of an indivisible unity; hunger and a sense of injustice were, as in political problems they must ever be, quite inseparable. Unfortunately we shall be forced, for the sake of clearness, to speak of the distress and of the ideas apart, but it is only in thought we can separate them. Or rather, they were separated before the Revolution, since the ideas were mostly among those who did not experience the distress. Exactly so can we separate the ingredients of gunpowder—but not when it is exploding.

In spite of these advantages, the view just mentioned is inadequate. Injustice and ideas do not make a revolution; there must above all be power. The poor asked for bread, and when they asked with too much clamour they received the gallows. Voltaire wrote books of sarcasm and Rousseau wrote books of sentiment, and the books of both were beautifully humane; but beautifully luxurious were the ladies and the gentlemen who read them and then yawned or played cards until the

next work of either author came from the press. It was necessary not only that reason should be appreciated whilst wrongs existed and were known. It was necessary that power should be ranked among the signs of change.

One has to lay supreme stress upon this matter of power, because the power that stirred at length in the foundations and set the walls toppling was the power that most characterises modern times, the power that has hitherto reaped most of the harvests of the Revolution itself, and is now culminating. It was the power of Capital—in other words, the power of Shylock. The coming of Usury was insidious and slow; in the Middle Ages it was trampled. The turning-point was in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Macaulay has described, with literary genius and fatuous admiration, how under William III borrowing became or began to become the principal business of government; a number of stockholders lent money to Dutch William and continued lending it to his German successors until the profoundest thinkers of the eighteenth century—Hume, for instance—foreboded ruin. The immediate consequence, however, seemed merely to be that the governments of Europe were able to increase immensely their available means of carrying on war. Once this game commenced, none of them could go back for fear of the others. William's great enemy, the Grand Monarque, being at his wit's end for cash, was once to be seen lavishing his unequalled politeness on a Jewish money-lender to whom he was

doing the honours of Versailles; the spectre was hovering.

In France and England, then, this business of borrowing was going on throughout the eighteenth century. There was no other country in which so much depended upon it as in these two. France and England were playing against each other for great stakes—greater than they knew. They were aware that they were fighting each other for America and for India, but of what the possession of America and India might signify when the powers of machinery and of capital should be unfolded, they had only a dwarfed idea.

In this kind of game the loser pays—and France lost. There came a time when France could no longer command credit; her money-lenders would back her no longer. It is true she had resources in the possessions of her nobles and her great ecclesiastics, but she could not realise these resources, because those classes were privileged, and could not be forced to contribute their share of the expenses of the State. The taxes had to be extracted from the poor, but the time came when there was nothing more to be had. The poor refused to pay, and though they might be hanged if an army could be paid to hunt them down, the interest of the debt could not be acquired by so simple a means, for if all that the poor man had were taken from him it would not suffice, and he would cease to produce.

It is important, therefore, above all things to keep in mind that when at length the last king of

Old France called a kind of parliament, the States-General, what he was really bent on was a financial expedient. It was not quite like summoning a meeting of creditors, because the meeting included those untaxable or inadequately taxable nobles and bishops whose property it was necessary to get at; but in summoning the States-General Louis XVI did hope to restore confidence, and to recover his power of borrowing, the basis of all other power under modern conditions. He did not perhaps reflect that when he looked the owners of capital in the face he was beholding those who were to succeed to his own absolute power.

Such were the principal economic antecedents of the Revolution. To complete the picture, however, mention should be made of a tendency of great moment that was to be observed in the villages. The peasantry were not all sinking into squalid hunger; many were improving their position; these were such as were able to become capitalists on a small scale and to take advantage of improvements. This appearance of a village middle class is not to be considered as a back-eddy or counter-current in the Revolution; there was no class more active in overthrowing the old aristocracy; those that are waxing fat kick the hardest if not the soonest.

We must now pass to those causes of the Revolution which it is most convenient to call political, though they are of great economic and great spiritual importance. An example of the way in which the political and economic antecedents of the Revolu-

tion are intermingled meets us at the outset. The middle classes, the commercial men and bankers, had no place in the Constitution; the nobles and higher clergy, with their exemption from taxation, had a very peculiar position of privilege without responsibility or political voice and office. These are facts of the first economic importance, but they are of the essence of the political system of Old France.

A study of that political system helps one considerably to the understanding of the Revolution. It was a bureaucratic despotism that had been imposed upon a feudal society. That fact explains the social importance and the political absurdity of the French nobles; it likewise affords another point of contrast with England. If we ask why the Revolution broke out in France instead of in England, seeing that the capitalist and industrial system which supplied the driving-wheel both of governments and of the forces that were changing them was more advanced in England than in France, the answer is partly, as we have seen, that in the game France and England were playing, it was England who won, and consequently England who swept in the stakes, India and America, and therefore it was England who could afford to pay the interest on her debt. But this is not the whole answer to the question why the Revolution did not break out in England instead of in France. The political Constitutions of the two countries in the eighteenth century have only to be compared to show that the

Revolution could not possibly have broken out in England. The English nobles were not like the French, a separate caste, for their younger sons were commoners; the nobles therefore were closely connected with the capitalist middle classes. In the second place, the nobles of England had a definite place in the Constitution; they understood and shared both legislation and administration, and, as part of the landowning class, they almost monopolised local government. Being part of the established power they supported the established system, and shared its burdens of responsibility and expense. The middle classes, likewise, had their share of power. The English government had, more wisely than the French, gradually taken its creditors into partnership, and if this meant that the old heads must eventually pass out of the business, they at least kept their name on the signboard, and everything was respectable; the transfer of power to the middle classes in England was without revolutionary violence, and the aristocracy held their own to a very great extent.

In France the kings, especially Louis XIV, had schemed and cajoled their nobles out of political power both in the provinces and at the centre. The nobles, it is true, had the monopoly of commissions in the army; here and there an aristocrat became an excellent ambassador; now and then a noble became first Minister of State. But the basis of the power of a landed, a feudal nobility, must ever be local power, provincial government

associated with landed property; and the government of the provinces had passed entirely into the hands of the King's officials, the Intendants of the generalities, the generality being the administrative division. The basis, again, of the power of a noble class of any kind is a fixed place in the central government, a place like that of the peers of Great Britain; and the States-General of France, of which the nobles had formed the most important member, had not been assembled for nearly two centuries. The French aristocracy spent most of their time at court; they were the most cultured body of literary and sporting parasites that ever existed.

The despot and the bureaucracy that governed France were very inefficient; the court and the officials were corrupt; the system was out of gear. The meaning of these words will be better understood when the next chapter has been read.

Passing from the political to the spiritual causes of the Revolution it is once more necessary to emphasise the unreal nature of the distinction. The *morale* of the whole aristocracy was essentially affected by the position they held or did not hold in the state. Moreover, the word spiritual must be held to cover the activities of the speculative mind of man; even economic theory, from its affinity with political justice, will most conveniently come under this head, but above all we shall have to analyse the ideals of thinkers.

Most prominent among these in his direct in-

fluence upon the Revolution was Rousseau. He was a vagabond of genius. Of humble origin, quite unable to settle to any steady occupation, he had spent a wandering youth; he was never so happy as when strolling from village to village in warm Savoy, amusing the peasantry like a wandering minstrel and passing long hours of reverie by the hillsides. At length he won a literary prize by an essay written to prove that civilisation was a great mistake or disease of humanity. He became one of the most productive literary men of his time; he likewise became an uncomfortable member of the cultured society of Paris. His character was unstable, his temperament sensual, sentimental and capricious, many of his acts being of the nature of impulsive madness; but he was a great man because his head was bursting with great, which also means disinterested, thoughts. He is at the top of three great schools of literature. He is the greatest of the sentimentalists, one of the greatest of the nature poets, though he did not quite succeed with metre, certainly one of the greatest of the prophets of democracy.

"Man is born free and is everywhere in chains." The explanation of this riddle Rousseau seeks to give in his most famous political treatise—*The Social Contract.* He assumes the equality of men as to political right and examines the basis of political obligation. Rejecting the idea that force can ever be the basis of political right, since against any government whose justification is force a rebel

may with the same justification take up arms whenever his force is sufficient, Rousseau finds the basis of political obligation in a Contract. He imagines the members of a political community to speak as follows: "Each of us puts in common his person and all his power under the supreme direction of the general will, and we receive each member into the body as an inseparable part of the whole." The sovereign is the general will, the whole people. Rousseau takes the idea of a contract from Locke, but his idea of a general will makes his contract essentially different from Locke's. Locke had conceived a double contract, first between the members of a community to obey a government, then between themselves and the government as to the terms on which obedience to that government shall be due. Rousseau conceives the people as governing themselves, not through their representatives, but directly. He considers the English people to be unfree, except during a general election, when they make the worst possible use of their freedom by giving it up. Rousseau's theory could obviously only be put into practice in a small state, or partly into practice in a federal state consisting of parts. He had known something of it in Geneva, where he was born, where he spent part of his boyhood, and to whose lake he sometimes loved to return. In religion he was a vague theist; in violent opposition to the Calvinism of his native city, shrinking from a complete suspension of judgment, he loved to feel Nature suffused with a divine spirit.

His politics had the strongest influence on the Revolution, and his religion on one of the foremost revolutionists. But it remains to inquire why Rousseau, preaching the rights of man, should be able to induce people to try to enforce those rights. Idealism in political thought was by no means new, and yet government had never been founded on justice. Ever since the time of Aristotle the idea of a law of Nature which is the law of God has been familiar to the most enlightened portions of Europe. It was proclaimed by Stoic philosophers amid the slavery of imperial Rome, and amid the barbarous oppressions of mediæval feudalism there were seldom wanting Catholic schoolmen to affirm the law of right. Fénélon represented this idealism under Louis XIV; in the Constitution of the great slave-holding republic of America it was proclaimed that all men are free and equal; and if we would understand why such simple and such time-worn doctrine wrought novel wonders under the pen of Rousseau, we must connect it, not only with the foregoing economic and political conditions, but with other movements of the eighteenth-century intellect. These were in the main two—Rationalism and Free Trade.

Rationalism was the doctrine that everything ought to be criticised by the mind of man. It is a development of the right of private judgment, which the Protestant Reformers generations earlier claimed but did not concede. It had since been claimed by so many people that by the end of the

eighteenth century, largely owing to the writings of such men as Voltaire, Montesquieu and Diderot, it was becoming the privilege of the educated classes, although now and again some case of persecution showed that the spirit of the Inquisition was not dead.

Voltaire was the master of that kind of wit which is but common sense sharply and compactly put. He had suffered in person from the insolence of a nobleman, and had been imprisoned in the Bastille when he wanted to avenge himself by the customary method of the duel. He became the patriarch of the philosophical school. Histories, fiction, poetry, plays, criticism, and a mighty host of pamphlets, all written in the most perfect French, all suffused with the liveliest wit, kept the world from dulness whilst Voltaire lived. He was the great enemy of persecution and cruelty, the champion of free-thought and humanitarianism. He differed from Rousseau in being a fine gentleman, the friend of princes, and by no means a democrat; above all he abhorred sentimentalism, the forcing of emotion, the tendency to mawkishness and maundering. "Almost he makes me to go on all-fours" he muttered after the perusal of a book by Rousseau. His religion likewise differed from that of the Genevese enthusiast. He was a deist and by no means an optimist; his god was the mighty geometer of the courses of sun and star; the earthquake which destroyed so many lives at Lisbon prevented him from thinking that God cared for man. Rousseau declared that Voltaire's god was an Almighty Devil.

Yet Voltaire's work helped Rousseau's. Voltaire's rationalism prepared men for the unprejudiced consideration of all kinds of opinions. This rationalism, the spirit of criticism and of discussion, did not prevail unchallenged. The earliest and one of the greatest men who wrote an important work on the French Revolution in English, Edmund Burke, had written the first of all his pamphlets thirty years before, in order to ridicule and refute the doctrine that everything should be considered open to discussion. But he was fighting against the stars in their courses. Discussion spread and conquered. When the institutions of Old France, institutions based on antiquity, religion and arbitrary power, came to be discussed in the light of reason, there was found scarcely anybody to say a good word for them.

Voltaire, we may say, did more than anybody, by universal criticism, to remove that sloth and spirit of routine which had prevented people from criticising existing institutions in the light of anybody's ideas that might be popular. And nobody had such a power of commending ideas to the people as Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Under the auspices of Rationalism, and blessed by the patriarch of intellectual freedom, came in the doctrines of Adam Smith and of Turgot. If in the domain of theory the democratic ideals of Rousseau corresponded to man's ancient frustrated hunger for justice, the Free Trade views of the great economists were the theoretical counterpart of the modern force of Capital that would not be denied. The financiers

and captains of industry meant to exploit to the uttermost for profit every man's power of labour and the last acre of cultivable soil. To any reasonably up-to-date economist the conditions of Old France were simply the spirit of wastefulness established and endowed. It mattered little to the financier whether some relic of communal village life preserved the freedom of the peasantry or whether the grinding exactions of a privileged marquis or bishop or prince paralysed the productivity of a countryside; whether between foreign countries or on the shadowy borders between the antiquated provinces of France, a ridiculous tariff kept him from buying in the cheapest market and sometimes from selling in any market at all. Whether such economist, such capitalist had the notion of human progress or private gain, the system was in all these things equally absurd, and all these conditions are but a few examples of the fetters that in Old France were imposed upon commerce and production; for bad as all these evils appeared in the financier's eye, they were trifles compared with a government which so gambled with national resources that no man's dividends were safe. And as government both depended on the power of money and could no longer be trusted by the men who controlled that power, the time had struck for those men to seize and control the government itself. In order to understand 1789, we must get a perspective in which Voltaire and Rousseau look like pigmies beside the sober Caledonian economist.

Yet may one ask whether the fundamental change could not have been carried through by the respectable persons concerned without such an explosion of blood and gunpower as actually shook the world. It is impossible to say what might have happened if deeper forces than Capitalism had not been roused. Even as it was, men who know how much depends on coincidence have thought that if Louis XVI had been a different man or had married a different wife there would have been a more peaceful change. Let us try to look at the court and the nation as they appeared in 1789.

CHAPTER II

THE OLD RÉGIME

THE French Revolution came almost at the same time as the Industrial Revolution with its monstrous growth of factories. It was followed rapidly by railways and was itself the first of the great modern social and political movements which give its distinguishing character to the unrest of the nineteenth century. The grim chasm in which we see the revolutionary crowds and people being guillotined yawns between us and quiet meadows and villages of the eighteenth century, the picturesque days of coaching and of coffee-houses, the shepherdesses of the garden as Watteau painted them and the drawing-rooms gay with ladies and gentlemen before the dress of gentlemen ceased to be picturesque. In that century was frequent war between France and Great Britain, but never was there so much intercourse between Paris and London as in its intervals of peace.

Paris, for two classes of Englishmen in particular, had a wondrous fascination—the men of fashion and the men of letters. Whether you desired a gorgeous waistcoat or nights and suppers philosophical, you

came to Paris. The ancient problem of civilised man, how to live worthily at leisure, had received there a solution which falls far short indeed of the satisfaction demanded by men whose natures are cast in a large mould of justice and freedom, but a solution where the sheen of mirrors in dark or silver settings reflected a world in which high and complex artifice had at least achieved brilliancy and grace. There was perfected the salon, where beauty controlled in a glittering net the men who cared for gambling and the men who cared for ideas, and melted away the partition which divides them. Unique was the respectful reception which frivolity there gave to recognised merit in scholars and philosophers of every kind. Horace Walpole took refuge there from the coarse associations of the English political dinner; Hume forgot the dignity of a philosopher between Parisian ladies on a sofa; Adam Smith found minds pursuing researches parallel with his own; and the aged Voltaire, though the vacuity of the gilded circles bored him, was nearly stifled with roses and adulation when he visited the capital from his European throne at Ferney.

What an Englishman of the courtly class would miss in Paris was the counterpart of St. James's Palace; the king did not live at the Tuileries, did not reside in his capital. There are just a few facts expressed upon the old French maps that of themselves go far to explain the Revolution; and here is one of them. Think of the busy and

fashionable and intellectual city of Paris, and remember that about a century previously the most magnificent of the kings of France had built at a sacrifice of human life that makes one think of Babylon and the Pyramids, a gorgeous palace ten miles west of the city. His successor, Louis XV, was an infamous voluptuary who lived in this vast palace of Versailles like Tiberius at Capri. There he lurked, as little known to his subjects as the Chinese Emperor to his—cunning, callous, and idle, careless of the welfare of his subjects, accessible to few besides his mistresses and the ministers they patronised, separated from the life of the liveliest people on earth by ten miles of forest whose silence was broken only by the gun of the royal sportsman and by the hoof-beats of couriers who came to announce defeats in every quarter of the globe. The gulf between France and the French monarchy was a dominant factor in the situation.

One Englishman, not satisfied with a general impression of Paris and Versailles, systematically explored France. In the years 1787, 1788, and, undeterred by the personal risks that beset the traveller, in 1789, Arthur Young pursued with methodical coolness and thoroughness a series of journeys and investigations to which we owe valuable knowledge of the condition of the people as the Revolution found them. In 1789, the French nation, when electing the members of the States-General, drew up in every constituency lists of necessary reforms. Arthur Young's diaries and these

instructions together give a mass of information whose significance has been much disputed.

There has been much debate as to the tenure of land. It has often been stated that the Revolution covered France with the small holdings of which we hear so much to-day. Against this it has been asserted that a large part of the country was occupied in small tenancies before the Revolution, owing to influences that began in the time of the Crusades, when servile tenures were commuted by nobles who required money for their expeditions.

This question of what happened with regard to land in the Revolution is of great importance on two accounts. A complete solution of it will only be possible when researches that are at present occupying a multitude of workers shall be completed, but the two great problems which depend on it are these. Have we to attribute the well-known prosperity of contemporary France to the Revolution? And, secondly, was the Revolution a middle class affair, or can we study it as a lesson in democracy? The answers to these questions depend only in part on research that has yet to be completed; in some measure they can be stated now; but they will come better at the close of this book than at its commencement, for much will be revealed by the narrative. What must be explained at this point are two of the main causes of impoverishment under the old régime. These two causes of impoverishment were feudal rights and administrative confusion.

The feudal exactions alone would have strangled

prosperity. First in the disastrous list come the rights of the chase. The wild animals who shared these rights with the feudal lords at the expense of the peasant farmer did more, if we include the results of the restrictions by which those animals were preserved, than all the other feudal rights together, to devastate the land, whilst the taxes took from the farmer one-half or two-thirds of what the foxes permitted him to earn. The most frightful punishments were incurred by the peasant who presumed to defend his corn from the depredations of game, and for the bare possession of a gun or a dog he might find himself rowing in a galley or languishing in a filthy and pestilential prison.

The most prominent example of another class of seigneurial exactions was the obligation to have one's corn ground at the lord's mill. The mill itself was often a most unsatisfactory structure; and the losses inflicted thereby upon the villagers who attended at their own inconvenience were often sufficiently serious, apart from thefts committed by his lordship's miller, to very nearly cripple the corn-trade and ruin the small holders.

Some of the services inflicted upon tenants by feudalism were of a personally degrading character; for example, whilst the seigneur and his family were snoring in their castle, the chilly margins of the moat and of the ponds beheld the exertions of shivering mortals to prevent the croaking of frogs. While such things were done under the moon, but only one hopes on the lands of exceptionally un-

sympathetic landlords, there were many forms of exaction, more closely bound up in the very fabric of society, which must have suggested, to any self-respecting seigneur, that his existence was an affliction to mankind.

But the government was almost as great a nuisance. The provinces had been incorporated into the French realm at different times and on different terms. Often their boundaries were very uncertain. This meant that in border villages nobody knew for certain what laws he could be punished for disobeying, or how many years might be taken to discover whether this or that inefficient court should decide a question of property or correct some ruinous official mistake. Where the boundaries were distinct, they merely brought into existence a line of toll-gates and customs-houses; one of the most urgent demands of 1789 was internal freedom of trade and transit. Before the Revolution the cost of grinding corn and sending it to market was so crushing that many a farmer found by harvest-tide that the only thing he could afford to do with his wheat was to leave it rotting where it grew.

The gabelle was a terrible scourge. Over the greater portion of France you could only get salt from government. This fact by itself would have been harmless, for governments have means of providing things cheaply and well. But the government of Louis XV and Louis XVI made of the salt monopoly an unrelenting tax. Every man and woman, every child over a certain age, was supposed

to require a fixed amount of salt for his own good and that of the King's revenue; therefore might no man, woman or child suppose that the eating of salt was of merely private concern. Four thousand wretched cottages in 1783 alone were broken into and the salt seized, as being smuggled, or unlawfully obtained at salt springs or from the sea. Such was the pressure of want that two thousand galley slaves doing their time for offences connected with salt could not frighten two thousand women and nearly seven thousand children from getting themselves arrested for like offences. It is a wonder they did not tax tears. But of all the money ground from the salt of the poor not more than two-thirds reached the royal coffers. In those days it was advisable to get employment in the department for collecting the revenue.

Even this bad system was made worse by the perpetual jobbing interference of the authorities. Not satisfied with taking bribes to grant a monopoly of the sale or transport of the necessaries of life, a minister of Louis XV deliberately set out to place in the hands of a gang of corrupt officials and courtiers an entire monopoly of the corn trade, a monopoly that placed both the producer and the consumer in their power. But the dissensions and scandals connected with this undertaking soon led to its failure.

Industry was nearly as closely trammelled as agriculture. Narrowly oligarchical corporations and guilds, the distorted wreckage of the once beautiful

ordering of mediæval civic life, perpetuated inefficiency and prevented the multiplication of commodities.

It will be seen in the history that follows how summarily these abuses were dealt with by the Revolution. It will not be my business in this book to endeavour to settle the problem of the distribution of land. But the reader is promised the end of the feudal exactions and feudal exemptions, the end of the gabelle, the end of internal customs-houses and mediæval corporations, and the end both of courtiership and of the fiscal system of robbery. Perhaps one at least of the causes of the present wealth of the French nation can without hesitation be guessed.

Of the two questions propounded some pages back this is the answer to one. Much of modern French prosperity is due to the great Revolution. The other question regarded the character of the Revolution itself. Was it democratic in intention, in methods, or in consequences? Or was it, on the contrary, prepared, controlled, and its advantage reaped by the commercial and professional classes? For this, too, the reader must await the narrative's unfolding. The question is put here in order that it may be kept in mind throughout.

All that need be said on this point at starting is that before 1789 there was little demand for government by the people. It is true that the Constitution of 1791 was based on the sovereignty of the people, but it was due to a rush of events such as the world

has rarely seen. We shall have to follow those events carefully if we are to understand that Constitution. The purposes of which men were most fully conscious when the States-General was being elected in 1789 were the removal of practical grievances, the diminution of privilege, especially in taxation, and above all to replace an ill-regulated bureaucratic despotism by a Constitution that should guarantee a reasonable degree of liberty and security; but all this was to be done peaceably, by gradual steps and in harmony with the ancient authorities of the State. The Constitution desired was what we should call a very Conservative one; it was chiefly to consist in establishing the rule of law. There was no clear intention of imitating the English Constitution, although English political thought had influenced French writers; there was no clear intention of imitating the Constitution of the United States, although many Frenchmen had fought on the side of Washington. There were indeed men who proposed to take the English Constitution for a model, but we shall see that their ideas were not adopted; certain provisions in the Constitution of 1791 resemble provisions in the Constitution of the American Republic; but nobody in 1789 intended to create a republic, and the profound distrust of the executive in 1791 was not an American importation; it was due to French experience of Louis XVI. The two habits of mind which seem traceable to American influence, the habit of looking on rebellion as a ready means of ending abuses, and the habit of

bringing constitutional and abstract theories into politics, did not necessarily lead to democracy.

But here we are conscious of having advanced a step. Voltaire and Rousseau are dead; they would not have been at home among the men who had been in America, the men who would put abstractions into practice and would readily leap to arms. Voltaire and Rousseau would not have been at home in 1789 had they lived into that year. And had they lived into 1793. . . .

But if the democratic possibilities of the time were unrevealed, if the peasant had mainly to be freed from definite wrongs and knew nothing about theory, the commercial and professional middle classes knew precisely what they wanted, and it was certainly not democracy. The politically conscious middle classes meant to do two things. They meant to limit arbitrary power, and to remove the restrictions on industry and commerce. The purpose of both these changes was the aggrandisement of those who intended to produce them, and the prosperity of the nation was expected to increase at the same time. So long as arbitrary power resided in a corrupt court and bureaucracy, no enterprise could be sure of its reward and no shareholder of his interest on government or any other stock; and so long as the restrictions on agriculture, transport, industry and commerce remained, it was utterly impossible to develop the resources of the soil or to exploit the skill of the population.

Lawyers formed no inconsiderable section of the

middle class and took a prominent part in the Revolution. They were enlisted both by interest and by conviction on the Constitutional side. Certain narrow corporations in which the purchase of office had become largely hereditary monopolised the prizes of the legal profession under the old régime. Moreover, Constitutionalism would mean a career for those who could follow it, and for a political career the young lawyers of Paris and other cities were about as well prepared as any class of men in France.

Our question as to the democratic or middle class origin of the Revolution is therefore answered. The democratic needs and impulses were present; we shall see that the Revolution was preluded by a series of riots and precipitated by resistance to taxation; but the only clear and ruthless purpose existed in the brains of the middle class. We shall have to trace the spasmodic intervention of the populace growing in frequency up to a certain point of time; but the covering of the country with small holdings (in so far as it actually took place, and the number of small holdings in post-Revolutionary France is often overestimated), was in large measure an accidental rather than a purposed result of the Revolution itself. The removal of seigneurial oppressions and of administrative chaos were a necessary part of the economic plans of the men of commerce; and it may as well be said at once that, whilst the peasant owed much to these reforms, the main advantage of the Revolution went to those

long-headed Capitalists whose destiny it has since been to make nineteenth-century Europe the factory of the world, and indirectly and unwillingly to forge what may well become the iron cradle of a more gigantic democracy than the world has known. These people knew what they wanted and got what they wanted, but the getting was harder than they knew.

Religion played an important part in the Revolution, but it will be easier to explain that part in the course of the narrative. The dignified ecclesiastics were very wealthy and some of them were hypocrites. A shoal of minor ecclesiastical sinecurists infested Parisian society and crowded the avenues of the court, some of them very charming and witty, some very wicked or dull. For all that, Catholicism kept its hold on the peasantry, and hundreds of humble parish priests, as poor as the tillers of the soil, were quite sincere in their religion.

The gulf between these ecclesiastical classes was wide; there was little mutual knowledge, and practically no promotion from the one class to the other. The good incomes were monopolised by courtiers and aristocrats. The poor priests understood the people because they were of the people, but the poor priests were powerless except as members of the crowd. Those of the higher clergy who took prominent parts in the Revolution did so because they were clever politicians or well-connected aristocrats or learned theorists. They voiced no sentiment of the people under their pastoral care.

CHAPTER III

KING AND PEOPLE

THE death of Louis XV in 1774 was a signal of change. During his long and apathetic rule the stream of political corruption and social injustice had been as it were frozen over. Soon after the accession of Louis XVI the ice-levels were seen to be in commotion; the first sound of the cataract was in the ears of statesmen; would they be able to steer out of the fatal current, or were they so entangled in abuses, that ice and vessel would go thundering over together.

Movement commenced in two quarters; the King began to reform, the people to riot. To some extent the interests of the King and the poor were the same. The King's power was endangered by want of money; the money was not forthcoming because the privileged classes who owned most of the soil were unfairly favoured in taxation. The distress of the poor sprang very largely from the exactions of the same privileged classes, and from the heavy taxation by which the national deficit was attempted to be supplied.

Louis XVI was sincerely bent on reform, but he had no intention of surrendering power. When

Necker suggested the summoning of local representative bodies, and offered Louis the prospect of being an intermediary between the provincial Estates and the nation, "It is of the essence of my authority," replied the King, "not to be an intermediary but to be at the head." He wanted to be a benevolent despot, but he had neither the mental grasp nor the restless energy that enabled such men as Frederick the Great or Napoleon to invigorate and at the same time control the action of a powerful state. With the best plans in his mind he often delayed to take any steps until such steps as he contemplated were insufficient. As difficulties thickened in front of him, with a confusing rapidity that characterises revolutionary days, he was continually meeting them by expedients that would have admirably fitted situations which in the relentless movement of Time were now irrevocably behind him. In person he was a dignified Bourbon; his profile was a very typical specimen of its massive and high-bred but rather sluggish type. He spent much time in hunting and frequently fell asleep in council. During Mass he was inattentive in his earlier and more prosperous years, but he had sufficient religion to be scandalised when he was asked to give an archbishopric to an atheist, and his piety was increased by misfortune. His courage was passive but imperturbable, and completed the list of qualities that compose that futile and respectable personage, a royal martyr.

To maintain this part to perfection he was

assisted, like Charles I of England, by the promptings of an imperious Queen. Marie Antoinette represented to the French people the unpopular alliance of their unpopular government with the hereditary antagonists of their country. Her nicknames reveal the national feeling. Quite early she was spoken of as "the Austrian," and later, whilst the luxury of her court splendidly devoured the proceeds of oppressive taxation, she went by the ominous soubriquet of Madame Deficit, when the removal of the deficit was the most urgent problem of the hour. Both nicknames were broadly true. She never became a Frenchwoman and she did nothing to lighten the burden that oppressed the land of her marriage. The old régime suited her very well, and at more than one crisis her influence on Louis was most unfortunately decisive.

The reign started with a bid for popularity on the part of Louis, who renounced the right to make certain levies which were customary at coronations. A second popular act was the recall of the Parlements. These were law courts whose only political duty was the registration of royal edicts. They had claimed the right to refuse registration and had consequently been exiled.

These reforms effected no fundamental change, but an important step was taken in the selection of a new controller-general of the finances. Among the great men who appeared in France in the half-century preceding the Revolution, only one was allowed to influence his country's fortunes in any

other way than by literature. Among the dexterous intriguers who wove their network of corruption across all the avenues to power came one grand figure whose fault, if such it can be called, was an austere sense of public duty. Educated for the priesthood and destined by his aristocratic family for the highest positions in the Church, he had, as he expressed it, preferred not to go through life with a mask on his face. That this very simple decision should be regarded as folly by some and heroism by others testifies to the atmosphere of thin hypocrisy which scarcely hid the cynical features of the courtly circle.

Turgot was one of the very few persons who have ever been called to power on account of their intellect and character. He had chosen the career of public service and had been Intendant at Limoges, having the government of one of those large districts called Generalities, which did not correspond to the division into provinces, but into which the country was divided for administrative purposes. This generality was suffering severely by the regulations in force regarding the trade in corn. Turgot was the greatest political economist in France. He held those views on the freedom of trade which we associate with the name of Adam Smith, and the letters which he composed for the instruction of the royal council in the needs of his generality and the principles of economics, though they failed to convince the government, have done much to instruct posterity.

Louis XVI did not call Turgot into his Cabinet as the result of any popular demand, but because the statesman had impressed a small group of persons with a great sense of his capacity for affairs, and Louis wished to have a better government than France had seen for a long time. Thoughtful men were hopeful of a new era when the philosopher was called to the exercise of power.

In one respect Louis might have been expected to work well with Turgot. The great minister did not wish to diminish the power of the King. They agreed that reforms were necessary and they agreed that power must not be divided. Turgot had indeed a plan for local assemblies, but he wished them merely to have the power to make recommendations and to carry out edicts. The King, on his part, was resolved to support the reformer. When Turgot, determined to have a free hand, requested the King to read a careful statement of his views, Louis took hold of both his hands cordially and replied, "Yes! yes! but I give you my word of honour beforehand, to share all your views and always support you in the courageous steps you will have to take."

Turgot's determination was to avoid bankruptcy, fresh taxes, and loans. He meant to save the State by reducing expenditure and reforming administration. His written words testify that he understood what opposition would most endanger his plan. "I shall have to fight," he says to Louis, "against your Majesty's natural kindness and generosity, and

against that of the persons dearest to you." He could scarcely have spoken more clearly without using names, or *a name*.

His first steps were worthy of his reputation. He drew up a plan whose purpose was, as he phrased it, "to put a schoolmaster in every village." It was his motto that "Orders, even, should be sown in prepared ground." He arranged for the most minute accounts of public receipts and expenditure to be drawn up, and on the 20th September 1774 he procured the issue of his famous decrees on the freedom of the corn trade.

The policy of Free Trade was energetically pursued in the twenty months during which Turgot held office. Besides abolishing restrictions on the trade in corn and some other articles, Turgot suppressed those guilds and corporations whose privileges hampered the development of industry, and took steps to free the peasantry from the corvée, a tax which was paid in labour upon the roads. His reforms were accompanied by preambles containing masterly explanations of their principles.

But at every step the minister made enemies. Whether he suppressed a privilege or an office in the customs, or tried to make the great landowners who chiefly benefited by good roads, pay part of the cost of abolishing the enforced labour of the peasants, he only added to the number of grudges among those who swarmed at the fountain of all privilege, the court. The King did not prove equal to his good resolutions; the premier, Maurepas, caring more

for office than principle, dismissed Turgot's friends and isolated Turgot in the Cabinet; the Queen during this period gained complete ascendancy over her husband's unoriginative mind. Louis gradually withdrew his confidence from the Controller-General, saw him less and less, and finally, in answer to frank remonstrances on his weakness, dismissed the only great man he ever had for a minister. "It is a thunderbolt," said Voltaire, "which has struck both my brain and my heart." Thus did the greatest living French writer, who, when Turgot had abolished the restrictions on the corn trade, had made haste "to kiss the hand that had signed the salvation of the people," prove his understanding of the greatest of living French statesmen. The fact that the needs of our own age, which has seen that unrestricted competition can be worse than feudal privilege, are so entirely different, need not blind us to the fatal nature of Louis' action.

Reforms did not altogether cease. In 1779 the King freed the serfs on his own domain, and in the following year there was a partial abolition of torture in the law courts, in spite of the opposition of the judges. But the tide of trouble was now steadily running more swiftly than ever to the great gulf. Whilst the King's reforming zeal became fainter with time and matrimonial influence, the desperation of the peasantry steadily developed in actions increasingly resolute. They had to bear the brunt of everything. Just when ideas of humanitarian philosophers were beginning to be popular, just when a few of

the villagers were giving the miserable majority of their neighbours an example of increasing comfort, the aristocrats and courtiers were finding that to live as one would like in days of advancing luxury and civilisation it is absolutely necessary to assert over one's tenants every right that has fallen dormant, to squeeze from starving wretches of whom one does not like to think, every penny of ancestral dues and every moment of customary labour. At the same time government was to exact from the same starving wretches the means of filling up that yawning deficit which grew more terrible every year.

So it happened that about this time the discontent of the peasants took the form of riots for bread and refusal to pay taxes. Crowds armed with scythes and poles invaded market towns and seizing stores of victuals forced the sale of them at a low price. Over whole districts the tax collectors found it impossible to perform their work. It would seem that we cannot attribute the riots entirely to misery that could not any longer be endured, nor to the spirit that comes with improving conditions, but rather to a sudden putting on of the screw at a time when hope and ideas were present, mocked by luxury and provoked by incompetence. The violence of the Revolution was due to the strength and variety of the needs and forces behind it.

The riots increased in effectiveness and extent from the accession of Louis XVI to the Revolution itself. In 1775 the flour-mills were attacked at

Dijon. The rising spread to Auxerre, Amiens, and Lille. The streets of Paris were soon swarming with peasants who pillaged the bakeries. Hanging seemed to the government the most suitable cure, but their victims quickly became martyrs. Between 1783 and 1788 nearly every part of France beheld similar insurrections.

Undoubtedly those obscure and haggard men who declined any longer to support the grotesque edifice of a corrupt civilisation deserve credit for supplying a necessary element in the first stages of the Revolution. American wars, beautiful queens, jobbing ministers, gambling nobles, need never have ceased to be maintained by the starvation of poor men's children, had the poor men themselves not refused to continue the part assigned them in the play. Ideas are certainly strong, but never so strong as when they get into the heads of those whose interest lies in having them turned into facts. The peasants had no scheme of social reconstruction. Therefore they sowed what others reaped. It was time at any rate for them to leave off demoralising the whole nation by supplying out of their penury the means of carrying on dynastic wars and the frivolous amusements of the court.

After the dismissal of Turgot most of his reforms were reversed. This, however, did not mean that matters stood where they were before Turgot's interference. The new guilds and corporations had exclusive rights far more pernicious than those of old. But it was in vain that the new ministers

tried to patch up the old régime. In the end each of them had to propose something which interfered with the exemptions of the privileged classes, and when each of them reached this point he fell. At length one of them, Calonne, whose notion of restoring confidence was to spend as much as possible, could get no more loans, and advised the King to call a Council of Notables.

In 1787 the Notables met. They were an assemblage of prominent people called together for the sake of giving some show of national consent to fresh taxes. To these people, mostly clergy, nobles and officials, the minister confessed the desperate state of the finances. More than a thousand million livres had been borrowed within ten years, and creditors were threatening the State with bankruptcy. The Notables would hear of no taxation of landlords, and a squabble ensued between them and the minister. Each side published a statement of the case, and the people learned at once of the selfish opposition of the privileged orders and the recklessness of the right honourable spendthrift. Calonne, who had now the same enemies as Turgot, was dismissed, and for once Louis gained popularity by following the Queen's advice.

Louis, however, still intended to be a reforming King, and since nothing could be got from the Notables but their approval of a fresh loan he dissolved them, and with the assistance of the Archbishop of Toulouse, his new minister, prepared a scheme

for taxing the landowners. The Parlement refused to register it and demanded a summons of the States-General.

The States-General was the old representative assembly of mediæval France. We have seen that since 1614 the Kings had ruled without it. Now the demand for its meeting became a universal cry, backed by fresh riots and by judicial protests. The Estates of a few of the provinces had continued to exist, though others had disappeared. Among those which had disappeared were the Estates of Dauphiné. The nobles of Dauphiné now took upon themselves without the summons of the King to hold a meeting of the Estates for their province. The meeting took place in 1788, and consisted of Nobles, Clergy, and the Third Estate, or as we should say, Commons. They condemned the royal edicts, and the principle of arbitrary imprisonment, but above all they demanded a summons of the States-General and declared that without it no fresh taxation should be imposed.

Matters were thus passing out of the control of the King and his ministers. Peasants refused taxes and took the bread business into their own hands. Judicial Parlements were appealing to public opinion against the King's demand for registration of his edicts, and the Nobles, Clergy, and the Third Estate of a whole province had given that province a Constitution under the very nose of government.

It was time to move. Turgot was no longer available, having died in 1781, but the ablest of his successors, Necker, was recalled to power, and the

King announced that the States-General should meet in 1789. Necker was a Genevese, a Protestant, a banker, and had a very great reputation as a financier. On his appointment the funds rose 30 per cent. He differed from Turgot on the subject of free-trade in corn, and also in his politics, for he was a Constitutionalist. He was very clever and had good intentions, but was inclined to be shifty and had none of the iron in his nature that the times required. With such a spokesman at his side, Louis faced the representatives of the nation.

CHAPTER IV

THE STATES-GENERAL

AT length the day for the great meeting arrived. The eyes of all the world were turned upon France and upon Versailles. We, who have become accustomed to read any morning in the papers that another ancient despotism has abdicated to make way for constitutional monarchy, can scarcely conceive the momentous point of time at which history arrived on 4th May 1789, when the occupant of the most conspicuous throne on earth confessed the failure of the whole system of bureaucratic despotism under which continental Europe had lived during the three centuries which had elapsed since the faintly known Middle Ages had given place to modern civilisation.

The States-General had a double character. In form it was a mediæval institution; it consisted of the Nobles, the Clergy, and the Third Estate; it mirrored a social system based on rank and privilege and prescription, on distinctions in blood, on traditional hierarchies and feudal gradations. The session was preceded by a celebration of Mass in the church of St. Louis. Between the processional pomp of

308 Clergy and the heraldic magnificence of 285 Nobles appeared 621 gentlemen in modest black, the representatives of the Third Estate.

But this revival of mediæval Estates had a significance entirely apart from tradition. The world was out of joint, the foremost despotism in Europe was bankrupt; after an abeyance of nearly two centuries, and coming together as representatives of a modern scientific and commercial age, this collection of deputies which only in name rested upon the part, in reality was summoned by destiny to mould the future.

The double character of the States-General was the cause of a preliminary struggle. If the Clergy and the Nobles made good their claim that the three Estates should sit and vote separately, they would be able to veto any proposals that might aim at the curtailment of their privileges; the distinctions of rank would not be abolished nor would the distribution of wealth be greatly changed. The struggle had been foreseen. It had been debated by the Notables and anxiously pondered in Council. In the weeks of rioting and universal discussion that preceded the elections, the ablest, boldest, most widely-read pamphlet of the time, a work by which its writer leaped into fame, had asked the questions:—"What is the Third Estate?"; "What was it yesterday?"; "What should it be?" The answers given in the pamphlet by the Abbé Sieyès were echoed in a volume of assent that swayed the minds of Necker and of the King. The Third

Estate had been nothing; it should be everything. The question to be settled before the elections was, how many deputies should appear for each Estate. If the Commons were to gain anything by the unification of the orders into a single house, and because they intended to aim at such unification, it was essential to them that they should equal in numbers the Clergy and the Nobles together. The financier Necker wavered. Court influence was all for the Nobles and the Clergy. He drew up a recommendation that the demand of the Commons should be refused. As the days passed and popular feeling broke out in ever louder menace he altered his plan. Aware that he was on a tide he could not control, he presented to the King and Council a scheme for the double representation of the Third Estate. Remonstrant Nobles and Clergy were informed that the three orders should vote separately and thus the Commons lose the advantage of their numbers. But the clever minister was obviously temporising. To grant double representation was in the eyes of the people the token that nothing could resist them; it was a virtual promise of a single chamber, a promise the breaking of which would raise their fury beyond all bounds. When the King in Council adopted Necker's decree the system of privilege was doomed.

A large hall in the Palace at Versailles was appointed for the meeting of the Estates. The great question of their joint or separate session was in every one's mind when the ceremonial opening took

place on the 5th May. The King made a brief speech and was followed by Barentin, the Keeper of the Seals, who spoke the royal mind. Barentin lectured the deputies on the scope of their mission and warned them not to undertake dangerous reforms. The Estates themselves might decide whether they would sit together or apart. The third official speaker was Necker. His principal business was to declare the state of the finances. He put a more hopeful colour on the situation than facts warranted. It was not his intention to mar the inaugural meeting with pessimism, so he omitted from his statement a part of the liabilities of the nation. The need, however, for a surrender of their exemptions on the part of the privileged orders appeared very plainly. He concluded by hoping that the surrender would be voluntary, and he assured the Nobles and Clergy that, if sitting separately they did what was required of them, they need not fear absorption in the Third Estate.

The great question was thus left unsettled. Either Necker had contradicted Barentin or he had misinterpreted the wishes of the Commons. The first episode in the history of the Assembly was therefore the dispute between the orders. Barentin had left them to settle between themselves the question of joint or separate session, and they showed no disposition to agree.

The matter was no mere legal and pedantic dispute between three groups of deputies. All Paris echoed with it and all Paris supported the demands

of the Third Estate. We are now at the beginning of a course of events in which the affairs of the Assembly at Versailles were to widen, new actors in the drama to crowd forward in greater numbers, until not merely was the business of the French nation under discussion by its representatives, but the French nation itself came upon the scene in its multitude, and seized control of the revolution which did not end until all Europe was involved in it.

The great centre of popular discussion in Paris was the Palais Royal, where the Duke of Orleans, the head of what might almost be regarded as a rival branch of the royal house, had let out the ground floor of a block of buildings in cafés and shops. Here, day after day, politicians discussed the situation, and orators issued from the doors to mount stool or chair and explain to the perpetual crowd the changing features of the struggle. Already they began to speak of seizing the castles of the lords, and carrying by popular violence the measures which constitutional action might fail to secure.

Thus encouraged, the members of the Third Estate away at Versailles were not deterred by the refusal of the Nobles and the Clergy to join their sittings. There were alternative policies. The Commons might insist on the suspension of all business until they were joined by the other orders. The formal verification of their powers was the first business on the programme, and until the 10th June

they steadily refused to proceed. On that day the alternative policy was propounded by the Abbé Sieyès, whose popularity, founded on his pamphlets, was still unimpaired. He proposed to issue an invitation to the other orders and to the individuals composing them, and however the invitation might be received, to proceed immediately to business in the interests of the nation. The dry man of theory became the spokesman of Revolution. The Third Estate adopted his suggestion; they verified their powers, and then, lest this action should seem like surrender, Sieyès moved that they should declare themselves by themselves to be the National Assembly, needing no other Estates to complete them. It was a bold move, but it was not unadvisedly made. About fifty of the Nobles and more than a hundred of the Clergy were prepared to join the Commons, and since the meetings of the Nobles and Clergy were private, the Third Estate, sitting under the eyes of the public whom they claimed to represent, seemed sufficient in themselves to be, not indeed the States-General, but the National Assembly, a name which now takes the place of the other. This stage was reached on 17th June.

The danger of the movement thus executed seems clear enough. By a policy of obstruction, by refusing to get on with formal business which had to be cleared out of the way before the work of reform could commence, the Third Estate could have held up the other two Estates, could have prevented their decisions from gaining the sanction of the complete

States-General. There was in such a situation the tenseness of a tug-of-war. But in a tug-of-war there is often no recovering the first relaxation or slip; once they commenced work, the Third Estate could hardly again take up the old attitude of protest consistently; their invitation to the other orders to join them could easily have appeared a mere dexterous way of covering a retreat.

Much in that critical week between the motion of Sieyès on the 10th and the vote of the 17th depended on public opinion, and public opinion was most readily gauged, most rapidly organised in Paris. Had Sieyès' proposal been greeted with derision in the gardens of the Palais Royal, the Conservative nobles and clergy might have waited their time. Had even discouragement seized the Parisians, had they felt the movement as a retreat, in all probability it would have become a rout. But they acclaimed it as a victory, or at least as the presage of a victory, and universal applause gave the newly self-constituted National Assembly the prestige of a popular mandate.

It gave them courage to do much more, to take upon themselves the whole authority of government. The National Assembly constituted by the decree of the 17th June was not authorised by any vote of their constituents, nor any vote of the other orders. The series of decrees that followed must be regarded as a stroke of genius, the more remarkable because genius is far more common in individuals than in Assemblies. It was the French audacity, the

audacity we shall find in the policy of Danton, the daring that we know in the literary art of Hugo.

The most important of these decrees was a declaration that the existing taxes were illegal and should therefore be levied only provisionally and so long as the Assembly sat. The whole claim of despotism is in this decree. Those who made it behaved exactly like the medical specialist who arrives in a sick-room and pays no deference to the authority of the master of the house.

There were two other decrees. A Committee was appointed to deal with the scarcity, and the National Debt was consolidated. The second of these two needs no comment after what has been said of the power of the financiers in an earlier chapter. The whole series of votes from the 17th onward may be summed up as follows. The Third Estate calls itself the National Assembly, and summons to their seats those other members of the Assembly who are playing at being orders of the States-General; it then declares that all the machinery of government shall depend on its will, for no taxes are to be levied if it is dissolved; lastly, it claims to be the champion of the populace by undertaking to fight the famine, and more important still, it becomes the champion of the capitalist by consolidating the National Debt. Could anything be more masterly than such an advance—all achieved in a few hours?

What would the King do? His authority was defied; he could no longer temporise. He had

arrived at the parting of roads. Hitherto he had not set himself in opposition to the mass of the people. His interests were in some respects their own. Both Crown and people were robbed by the exemption of the privileged orders from all but a mockery of taxation. Those who had spoken for Louis at the opening of the States-General had clearly pointed out what he expected the Nobles and Clergy to do.

Monday, 22nd June, was fixed for the day of a royal sitting, when the King would again meet the three orders in the great hall. On Saturday, the 20th, he held a Council of ministers to decide what pronouncement should be made. At this Council there were two opinions. Barentin wished the King to oppose the pretensions of the Third Estate, whilst Necker had brought with him a constitutional scheme intended to outbid the Assembly for popular favour. The following Monday would see the States-General dismissed, and the people invited to accept a Constitution from the King. As the Assembly had its Constitution still to make, the King would be beforehand; he would have considerable chance of success. Louis was deciding in favour of Necker's plan when he was called away; the Queen and the courtiers, who spent anxious days waiting for a chance to stave off reform, and bent on getting rid of Necker, had heard news which altered the whole situation. This news caused Louis to reject the policy of Necker and to place himself in opposition to his people.

CHAPTER V

THE VICTORY OF THE COMMONS

HISTORY sometimes achieves an artistic finish worthy of Romance. If a satiric dramatist had planned the overthrow of an ancient monarchy and aristocracy whose pomp and ceremonial had become hollow, no more delicate stroke surely could be given to end the gorgeous sham, than such a stroke as might be dealt by a court Master of the Ceremonies with his wand of office. History, feeling this keenly, brought upon the stage Mercure de Brézé to bring down the monarchy of Hugh Capet.

On that critical Saturday morning when the King was discussing with his Council the adoption of Necker's reforms, de Brézé brought about quite unintentionally the first really dramatic scene of the Revolution. The Master of Ceremonies had the arrangements to make for Monday's royal sitting. The great hall where the Third Estate held their debates was the most suitable place for the occasion. A courteous Master of Ceremonies would have approached the President of the Assembly, would have made other arrangements for the deputies. But this particular Master of Ceremonies had all his life

associated ceremonies in a special way with royalty and nobility; if the gentlemen of the Third Estate had not observed his placards that was no fault of his. He had even troubled himself to write a letter to Bailly, the President, which Bailly received on Saturday morning, telling him expressly that on that same Saturday the Commons could not have the use of the hall.

Was Bailly going to send round express messengers to the six hundred or so deputies? It was hardly to be expected. Bailly was a punctilious man where personal dignity was concerned, besides being a famous astronomer. A few years afterwards on a chilly morning he was walking to the scaffold. "You are trembling," remarked a bystander. "It is with cold," replied Bailly. Such men resent insults.

But suppose Bailly to have been actuated only by calm policy. So far as he could guess, the court party intended to checkmate the Assembly; de Brézé's offhand behaviour did not augur well; the King's pronouncement on Monday would probably be adverse. It was clearly necessary to put the court in the wrong, to let the world see how the representatives had been insulted; it was also advisable that the representatives should meet before the royal sitting, in order to concert a definite policy. So Bailly came as if to an ordinary meeting of the Assembly; other members did likewise, and a crowd collected under a drizzling sky. Led by their President the deputies marched up to the doors demanding admittance; admittance was refused; Bailly might, however, fetch away his papers.

Thus came about the most famous indignation meeting in history. The affronted assemblage repaired in a body to a neighbouring tennis-court. It must not be supposed that the proceedings there were instigated by the more fiery members present. The man who took the lead was Mounier, a temperate, experienced, and conservative lawyer; when the province of Dauphiné set France the example by calling together her provincial Estates, Mounier had led them with great learning and prudence. He admired the Constitution of Great Britain, but it was the Constitution under which this country was ruled in the reign of George III. His moral character was upright and fastidious.

Such was the man who proposed to the deputies in the tennis-court that memorable oath by which they bound themselves not to separate until they had given a Constitution to France. There was only one dissentient; his friends were obliged to hurry him from the place.

The news came to the court; the King, as the reader knows, was in council, with good intentions and the Queen sent for him. The good intentions were dropped and were not recovered; the Master of Ceremonies had been steering the ship whilst the King and the ministers were in the cabin consulting; Louis emerged from the hatchway to find a mutiny, and thought no more of conciliation.

The royal sitting was not held on Monday but on Tuesday. This little fact is very important, for on Monday, 22nd, the National Assembly was joined by

one hundred and forty-nine members of the Clergy. The action of these priests may be regarded as decisive; they would not have joined the Third Estate on the very day before the matter of joint or separate session was to be decided by royal authority if they had not intended to defy that authority; they would perhaps not have taken so plain a step had not the Third Estate shown indomitable spirit on Saturday in the tennis-court. Public opinion, moreover, was loudly on the side of the Third Estate and of the hundred and forty-nine. It was written that Louis should be ruined by delays; it was fatal folly not to have settled the question of joint or separate session weeks before; but it was hard that a single day's delay should so increase his difficulties.

Even the King's delay might have been turned to account if he had read the lesson of that week-end. But on Tuesday he met the assembled Estates with a clear refusal to allow them to form one Assembly. Not content with this he went on to range himself definitely on the side of the privileged orders against the people, which, as we have seen, there was nothing in the logic of his position to force him to do. He confirmed class distinctions and feudal rights; nothing was to be taken from the privileged classes except with their own consent, and on no matter concerning either privilege or the Constitution might a joint session be held; the decrees by which the Third Estate had declared itself the National Assembly, had declared the taxes provisional, had appointed a famine committee and had consolidated the National

Debt, were rescinded. The King had chosen his road; it was the wrong road.

The royal sitting was followed by a scene yet more memorable. The King, like Charles I of England, whose life in these days, he and his Queen, with sad presage, took to reading, declared that if the Estates of his realm would not carry out necessary reforms in a proper manner he would do so himself and without their aid. Then he left the hall followed by the court and followed by the Nobles and those of the Clergy who had not gone over to the Third Estate. The Third Estate saw the last privileged heel vanish from the door, and moved not.

Then, as if he had not already provoked enough opposition, the Master of the Ceremonies, with whom this chapter opened, came to close it. He beheld sitting in long rows in the vast hall with a wide space around them the stern men who had sworn that they would not separate until they had given France a Constitution, and he announced the King's orders that they should leave the hall. He was made to understand that in a single day he had become an anachronism. The great voice of the most powerful orator in the Assembly, the voice of Mirabeau, declared that if they were to go they would yield only to force. De Brézé, not to be incorrect on a ceremonial point, inquired the sense of the Assembly from its President. "The nation is assembled here and receives no orders," said Bailly. The King, then, was no longer the *de facto* sovereign

and poor de Brézé's occupation was gone. He slunk out abashed, not to return.

The victory of the Commons and of his own policy was announced by Sieyès: "Gentlemen, you are to-day what you were yesterday." This final blow succeeded, for on the 27th June, the King, having reason to doubt the fidelity of his troops, notified his wish to the remainder of the privileged orders that they should join the Third Estate. It was just ten days since Sieyès had invited them.

CHAPTER VI

THE BASTILLE

FROM Versailles the scene changes to Paris. In the centre of Paris, on a large island of the Seine, stands the Cathedral of Notre Dame in a region of huddled streets. On the north bank, opposite the eastern end of the island but standing a little back, is the Hôtel de Ville or Town Hall, the seat of the municipal government and therefore in a sense the headquarters of the middle class. Going westward along the northern shore, as in London one proceeds by the Embankment as far as the Palace of Westminster, the Parisian would arrive at the mediæval palace of the Louvre, a sort of West-End Tower of London by the waterside. The next building to the west of this was the Renaissance palace of the Tuileries, which may be compared with Whitehall for the moment; in the course of a chapter or so it will have to do duty for Whitehall and the Houses of Parliament in one, but, for the present, the Assembly is at Versailles.

If you go through the Tuileries and pass out on the northern side, the side remote from the river, you can cross the road to the Palais Royal where

lives the Duke of Orleans; he and his Palais Royal, soon to be called Palais Égalité, shall be described in this chapter. First let us turn eastward, and proceed in a parallel but contrary direction to our former walk along the Embankment, as in London one might vary the monotony by walking back along the Strand up to Temple Bar and along Fleet Street to Ludgate Hill and St. Paul's. In doing this we have passed on our right the street that would have taken us down to the Hôtel de Ville, the river, and the island. Roughly speaking we can call the Strand the rue St. Honoré and Fleet Street the rue St. Antoine, but instead of arriving at St. Paul's we have arrived at the Bastille, the fortress and prison which frowns eastwards over the slums, which are known as the suburb, or faubourg de St. Antoine. If the inhabitants of this East End wish to march west for political purposes, the governor of the Bastille will try to stop them.

Of the buildings mentioned above, the Bastille, the Hôtel de Ville, and the Palais Royal are of the greatest importance for this chapter.

Arthur Young, that excellent matter-of-fact Englishman to whom gratitude has already been expressed for his plucky journeys all over France in these dangerous times, has left a description of the Palais Royal as he saw it about six months after the date at which we have arrived. The Palace was the residence of the Duke of Orleans, the King's nearest important relative after his brothers,

a man ruined in health and purse by gambling and sensual vices. His position at the head of what I have called a rival branch of the royal family gave him the notion of coquetting with the Revolution, and among politicians who felt that Louis was becoming impossible, there were some who thought of putting forward Philippe of Orleans for the regency. Philippe himself lacked the courage to seize an opportunity, but though unequal to politics he was enterprising in another way; he had laid out the grounds of the Palais Royal as a pleasure garden, enclosing what Arthur Young calls a "gew-gaw building meant to be concert, ball, coffee and billiard room, with shops, etc." In these gardens during the early days of the Revolution crowds flocked continually about their favourite orators, to hear what the King and the Assembly were doing at Versailles, to be warned of the plots of the court, and to have their spirits maintained at the revolutionary pitch.

From Paris we return to Versailles, where the first stiff struggle between the Court and the Assembly was ended on 27th June, by the King's permission for the three orders to sit and vote together as the National Assembly. The Assembly had played boldly and had won the first contest. The Court, led by the Queen and Louis' brothers, the Counts of Provence and Artois, plotted a counterstroke; there was to be a second struggle before the old system of privilege succumbed. The King was induced to mass troops about Versailles, cutting off the Assembly

from Paris. It was then intended suddenly to dismiss Necker, to imprison about forty of the deputies, and thus to restore the despotism of the Crown.

The Assembly was aware of the plot and prepared for conflict. To lead against the King's troops they had the populace of the capital. If it came to determined fighting between the army and the crowd there would be small hope for the crowd; but the army was not completely to be relied upon, one or two regiments of the French Guards having been disbanded owing to their mutinous behaviour. The progressive party in the Assembly kept in touch with democratic Paris by means of agitators who canvassed the gloomy St. Antoine district and kept up a continuous flow of oratory in the gardens of the Palais Royal.

The middle-class revolutionists did not willingly ally themselves with the multitude; they did not wish to share political power with men more democratic than themselves. They had now a National Assembly in which the Third Estate had an easy majority; the way seemed open for a nice Whiggish Constitution in which free trade should prevail and fortunes be made and money be supreme. This attitude of theirs came out very clearly, both as regarded the King and as regarded the people.

First as regarded the King; the Assembly would have preferred his assistance to that of the masses. On the 27th June, the very day of their triumph in

the matter of joint session, Mirabeau made a speech putting the best construction upon the King's acts, and warning the Assembly against "seditious allies." But the massing of troops continued, and the Assembly would soon be at the mercy of the Court. Still, the attempt to conciliate the King was not abandoned; on the 10th July he was requested, in a petition stuffed with flattery, to order the retirement of the troops.

The attitude of the Assembly towards the populace is partly explicable by the honest feeling of many deputies that in politics a certain continuity must be preserved; they had not met for the purpose of overthrowing monarchy; in spite of the audacity of their recent decrees they did not wish for civil war. But it has to be admitted that a strong divergence of material interests had begun to appear between the Assembly and the nation. The purposes of economic exploitation, upon which so much emphasis has been laid in an earlier chapter, were beginning to have play. This fact appeared in connection with the corn supply. Necker forbade the export of corn and gave bounties on its import. Speculators exported secretly the food so badly wanted, in order to get the bounty over again by reimportation. This kind of crime was not merely committed by one or two specially bad members of their class, for when the matter was brought before the Assembly all parties united in suppressing discussion and no names were allowed to be mentioned. The class interest of the members of the

Assembly was a sinister interest as regarded the nation; the privileged orders had already their successors who had no more desire to introduce democracy than the dukes themselves.

Unfortunately for the Assembly the King's alliance could not be obtained; the answer to the petition was unsatisfactory; the troops were not removed. Paris must come to the rescue; if the powers above are implacable men apply reluctantly to those below. From the 8th July crowds armed with pikes were perpetually afoot in the city; on the same day, at Versailles, Mirabeau predicted that if the troops were not withdrawn the streets would run blood.

In these days of excitement and peril the Revolution became creative. In a remarkably short space of time the politicians of the middle class in the Assembly and at the Hôtel de Ville brought into existence three institutions that were so well adapted to their purpose that similar institutions became leading facts of subsequent revolutionary history.

One of these institutions was the political club which afterwards came to be the Jacobins; it was the prototype of the Caucus. At first it consisted of a few deputies from Brittany and was called the Breton Club. Soon, frequented by most of the leaders hostile to the court, it was the factory of opinion and policy. It was not, however, until several months had passed, that the Jacobins, established in the monastic hall from which they drew their name, extended over France a network

of affiliated societies and supplied a unifying machinery to the Revolution.

The second institution that sprang to life in those days was the Paris Commune. The elections for the States-General had been indirect, electors being appointed to choose the deputies. In Paris these electors continued to meet for consultation in spite of the fact that they had no longer any official capacity. Late in June they received a kind of recognition from the municipality, which gave them a room in the Hôtel de Ville. They were soon to supplant the municipality itself, a body formed under the old régime by royal nomination, and to exercise great influence on the course of the Revolution. But it was not until August 1792 that the Insurrectionary Commune started into existence and gave complete expression to the revolutionary spirit.

The third institution was the National Guard. The Breton Club had for its purpose the formulation of policy before it came to be debated in the Assembly; the Commune and the National Guard were intended to give control of Paris to the electing and propertied classes, both against the King and in restraint of the populace. The National Guard was a citizen militia, the middle class in arms.

The populace likewise were arming. Anybody walking about Paris in the early part of July was liable to be stopped by grim little gangs demanding money to buy gunpowder. The gangs grew from

day to day; fifty thousand pikes were forged in the suburbs; whole districts were held by insurrectionary bands. Here and there the sky was reddened by a conflagration; it was a toll-house burning.

As the crisis approached, the deputies at Versailles discovered that they could by no means dispense with "seditious allies." The King, with the most engaging professions, refused to remove the troops. It was because the gardens at Versailles had become an armed camp where all the blandishments of a court were lavished upon the soldiery, that the gardens of the Palais Royal, by a perverse mimicry, became a perpetual armed public meeting where all the blandishments of orators were lavished upon pike-bearing patriots. It was because honourable members at Versailles began to experience the fear of being arrested in their beds that crowds flowed night by night more full and more tumultuous in the streets of the capital. For several days and nights Paris was at the mercy of huge multitudes that swarmed from the gloomy region where narrowest alleys crowded thickest; there was little plundering, and some depredators were punished with death; but the circulation of pike-waving democracy was maintained by the heart-beats of the Palais Royal, until respectable citizens, looking upon the world from their upper windows, grew terrified, for civilisation seemed afloat upon a flood of anarchy that was still rising.

The impatience of the court precipitated the

crisis. On the 11th, Necker was dismissed suddenly. As he passed through the royal anteroom d'Artois shook a fist in his face; the fallen minister was commanded to leave the country immediately, and as he drove towards the Belgian frontier his carriage was followed at a distance by two officers on horseback with orders to arrest him if he diverged.

Paris quickly received the news. On Sunday, 12th July, a young journalist of impulsive and attractive social temperament, by name Camille Desmoulins, standing on a chair outside a café at the Palais Royal, called the people to arms, thus doing *his* part in the launching of the greatest of all revolutions, in which his own career, his own romance, too, of love and marriage, friendship and untimely death were to be borne away like a thread of cotton in an avalanche.

The speech of Camille was in the morning. Processions were the order of the afternoon; busts of Necker and of d'Orleans were carried about. On Monday the royal military authorities in the Bastille, under the command of de Launey, saw fresh crowds go surging past him from the swarming huddled suburb and west along the rue de St. Antoine towards the political quarters where everything was doing. At the Hôtel de Ville the civic middle-class authorities maintained some kind of communication with organisers of insurrection. The civic authorities gained the confidence of the crowd, received from it a request for muskets, and sent it, by the advice of de Fleselles, Provost of Merchants,

a number of boxes packed with old linen. The Provost was to pay for it.

In places the mob and the military had met; here they fought; there, more alarming fact, they fraternised. More pikes came surging up, food was distributed, and over all roofs was heard the incessant clangour of the tocsin.

On the fourteenth the populace had a clear purpose. Everywhere the cry rang "à la Bastille." Governor de Launey, looking over the battlements, beheld the whole district alive and moving towards him. The attack began soon after noon. It was not all mob that surged below, for disbanded French Guards were directing the advance. By three o'clock the assailants had obtained cannon, and an outer drawbridge was beaten down. Then a small band, not more than a dozen, scaled a wall and introduced their friends into a courtyard. When this courtyard was crowded a volley rattled among the assailants from above and killed about a hundred men. This infuriated the populace, among whom the belief ran that de Launey had admitted the people into the courtyard as for a parley and then fired on them. With deadly anger thus inspired in the assailants the governor began to realise that he could not hope to be relieved. The military commandant of Paris did not come to his help. The authorities of the National Guard had sent him a deputation at the beginning of the fight, with an invitation to surrender the fortress to their middle-class militia, and he had of course refused.

Now, in despair, he prepared to blow up the powder-magazine, but a soldier prevented him and he did not persist. Soon after four o'clock it was decided to capitulate.

The French Guards who had directed the attack now endeavoured to protect their prisoners from the fury of those who believed in de Launey's treachery. Some of the captives were enabled to escape; others were hurried to the Hôtel de Ville, on the very steps of which de Launey was decapitated, and four or five soldiers killed. Fleselles, who had sent rags for muskets, also met his death, shot by an unknown hand.

The fall of the Bastille had a mighty reverberation; it was hailed in many lands; the populace of Paris had struck a decisive blow. The victory of the 14th July was no mere symbolism; its immediate consequences were too definite and significant for any mistake to be possible. The fall of the Bastille not only signified much but it caused much. Louis XVI did not at first understand; when the news came that evening to Versailles, he announced that he had withdrawn his troops from Paris and he went to bed. He was awakened at two o'clock in the morning and informed that Paris had effectively thrown off his government; that many soldiers had fraternised with the rebels and that no time was to be lost. The King came down to the Assembly, which had been hastily called together in the dim hours, and surrendered on the disputed points; the delegates were to be declared inviolable and the

troops were to be removed. He was met with loud cheers; he had been beaten in his second fight with the Assembly, for the 14th July had confirmed the decision of 27th June, but the Assembly was satisfied with its victory.

This victory had been purchased by the blood of the defenders of the Bastille who had been murdered and of those hundred or more of the assailants who had fallen in the attack. The attitude of the middle-class authorities had been equivocal; after inciting the people to insurrection they had tried to use the crowds for frightening de Launey into a surrender to the National Guard; when the day's fighting was over the National Guard assumed control of the city, and many of those who had fought were disarmed. Though they had not succeeded with de Launey they did succeed with Louis, and having gained their point they decided on a formal reconciliation with him. On the next day he visited Paris to acknowledge the new authority at the Hôtel de Ville, where Bailly had been chosen as mayor of an elective municipality. There the National Guards crossed their swords above his head; the new mayor fastened in the hat of the submissive monarch that tricolour cockade which was the badge of the New France, amid the cheers of the new ruling class. But behind the line of steel that guarded the roadway the packed throng of the populace, who had left a hundred of their dead in the courtyard of the Bastille, watched the scene with gloomy silence.

Louis' defeat was unmistakable, but it may still

be asked why he surrendered so quickly. In the news that ran all over France and reached Arthur Young in Champagne special stress was laid upon the fact that some of the soldiers had mutinied, and that there was "no reliance to be placed on the rest of the troops." But without depreciating the importance of this cause, one may easily infer another. Before many days had passed the Count d'Artois, the Duchess de Polignac, and a crowd of the courtiers that had schemed the *coup d'état* and the fall of Necker, who was now on his way back to be reinstated, were in full flight across the frontier. When their boasting before the event and their eagerness in precipitating the King into it are contrasted with such utter panic and resourcelessness directly after, one can scarcely doubt that Louis' quick surrender was partly due to his having about him such blundering and inept braggarts as the prince of the blood who had shaken his fist in the face of the best financier of the realm. The army was unreliable, the court party was a broken reed, the King had nothing before him but surrender.

D'Artois and his friends were the first of the *émigrés*, those Frenchmen who preferred privilege to patriotism, and whose loyalty to their King and Queen did not inspire them to remain at their side in the zone of danger. They had been preceded by the spendthrift minister Calonne, whose perennial hopefulness and officious intriguing spirit impelled him to join them and to become their busybody-in-chief. Their principal occupations were the con-

coction of plots in and about the court of Louis where they had many agents, and the creation throughout Europe of a body of opinion hostile to the Revolution. In this last work they were assisted by the greatest literary genius in English politics; Edmund Burke's Whiggism, unlike that of Charles Fox, could not stand the shock of the French Revolution, and his irrational yet prophetic masterpiece ran through the courts of the Continent like the fiery cross of war.

The effect of the fall of the Bastille upon the provincial towns in France must be mentioned in this enumeration of results, but will require a fresh chapter for its explanation.

At Versailles, on the day when the King visited Paris, Marie Antoinette had carriages in readiness for immediate flight; when Louis returned with the tricolour cockade in his hat she received him with bitter contempt.

CHAPTER VII

THE REVOLUTION IN THE PROVINCES

IT is often thought in England that Paris makes Revolutions and France acquiesces in them. This has certainly sometimes been the case, but in 1789 it might almost be said that the reverse of it was true. We have seen in Chapter III how before the summons of the States-General the peasants were refusing to pay taxes, and how in one province, that of Dauphiné, all classes joined in setting up a representative system. These events, particularly the refusal of taxes and the seizure of food-stuffs, did at least as much as anything else to bring the King's government face to face with the impossibility of continuing the old system of privilege.

In one movement indeed the provinces followed Paris. In most of the towns the old privileged municipal corporations were overthrown and elective communes established in their stead. But this movement followed the fall of the Bastille spontaneously; it was not the outcome of any decree of the National Assembly. In some places it was effected by peaceful means, in others violently. Arthur Young happened to be at Strasbourg on the

21st July. He spent some time in the morning reading the gazettes and journals that gave an account of recent events in Paris and elsewhere. He says in his journal: "The spirit of revolt is gone forth into various parts of the kingdom; the price of bread has prepared the populace everywhere for all sorts of violence; at Lyons there have been commotions as furious as at Paris, and the same at a great many other places: Dauphiné is in arms: and Bretagne in absolute rebellion."

In the evening he walked about Strasbourg. He set down in his diary that night an account of what he had observed:—

"I have been witness to a scene curious to a foreigner; but dreadful to Frenchmen who are considerate. Passing through the square of the Hôtel de Ville, the mob were breaking the windows with stones, notwithstanding an officer and a detachment of horse was in the square. Perceiving that their numbers not only increased but that they grew bolder and bolder every moment, I clambered on to the roof of a row of low stalls opposite the building against which their malice was directed. Here I beheld the whole commodiously. . . . In about a quarter of an hour, which gave time for the assembled magistrates to escape by a back door, they burst all open and entered like a torrent with a universal shout of the spectators. From that moment a shower of casements, sashes, shutters, chairs, tables, sophas, books, papers, pictures, etc., rained incessantly from all the windows of the house."

For two hours Young watched the proceedings. He remarked several soldiers helping the mob, also persons "so decently dressed that I regarded them with no small surprise. They destroyed all the public archives."

Similar scenes happened in various towns, and this movement was a distinct echo of the 14th July. It produced a crop of elective municipalities and of National Guards.

But the movement among the peasantry was quite another matter; it had nothing to do with the fall of the Bastille. In an early chapter it has been shown how, before the States-General met, the villagers over large parts of the country had risen against the taxes; bread riots were intermittent almost from the time of Louis XVI's accession, but from the winter of 1788 they were incessant. After the tax-gatherers had been driven out of the villages, a movement against feudalism ran about the north-east, east and south-east like the flames that consumed the castles of the nobility; everywhere the records of dues and exactions were destroyed. The abolition of the feudal system was chiefly the work of the peasants themselves. By March 1789 the whole of Eastern France was in the hands of its own inhabitants, and neither the landlord nor the tax-collector could live on it any longer. The whole system described in Chapter II had met with a violent end throughout the greater part of the country.

We know, therefore, what value to attach to the

famous conduct of the National Assembly on the night of the 4th August, when the question of the feudal privileges came before it. The debates on the subject showed a mixture of impulsive generosity with calculating selfishness. Noble after noble rose to renounce his feudal privileges in accordance with the instructions drawn up at the time of the election of the States-General, and in accordance with the warnings that glowed by night upon the sky. But with morning came repentance, and in the days that followed the generous decrees were nullified; compensation was to be given for the surrendered rights, and until this compensation, thirty years' purchase, could be raised, the decrees were to remain in abeyance; all that had been done was to assert the most excellent principles without attempting to give them administrative effect.

The peasants themselves, who had already given effect to those principles, now took the decrees of August as a justification of all that they had accomplished. We must not attribute to these peasants the political intelligence of the lower middle class in Paris. In the villages, Arthur Young found it very difficult to get a newspaper. All kinds of rumours were swallowed by the rustics. It was commonly believed that the Queen had a plot to massacre the National Assembly. The Englishman's inquiries puzzled the villagers dreadfully. The woman who for a few sous undertook to guide him to some desolate volcanic remains, nearly lost her life. The natives thought their neighbour was

betraying them to a spy of the Queen. His explanations only made matters worse. Why had he been inquiring about agriculture if he only wanted to see an extinct volcano? He managed to save the woman, but he never saw the volcano. "There were two opinions," he says; "one party thought I was a commissaire, come to ascertain the damage done by the hail; the other that I was an agent of the Queen's, who intended to blow the town up with a mine, and send all that escaped to the galleys." A report very widespread among the peasantry was that the King or the Assembly had given orders for the destruction of the castles. This belief was probably not always genuine; it served to encourage waverers and may have been thought by those who professed it, to constitute some kind of excuse in the eyes of the law. The news of 4th August seemed to justify all; the complete legal result, with its nullifying provisions, probably never reached the rustic mind, perhaps not even the rustic ear.

In some parts attempts were made to crush the movement. The citizens of Strasbourg, among whom Arthur Young noticed well-dressed people joining in the overthrow of the old narrow corporation, claimed feudal rights over the neighbouring district.

On both sides grew myths. The peasants eagerly seized the floating rumours of the Queen's ill-will and gave them a form which held their crude imaginations; the King appeared in these myths

like a fatherly ruler giving ear to the complaint of his people and ordering the destruction of the oppressor; the 4th August was the day of liberation and nothing else about it was mentioned or understood.

The provincial middle classes, the shopkeepers in the small towns and the flunkeys in the castles had likewise a myth of their own. These wild bands who marched by night, who burned the country-seats of noblemen and vanished in frightful tumult up the country lanes, were no mere peasants like those one could see if one took an afternoon drive among the fields and villages around. They were "brigands," and none could say whence they came or whither they departed. Only they were "brigands." That fact was certain; it justified killing at sight, hanging such unfortunates as could be brought into the clutches of what remained of the law-courts, and a general fear of dark encompassing masses moving by night.

But, after all, the feudal system had been thrown down, and there was no power in France capable of setting it up again.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ASSEMBLY AND THE CONSTITUTION

WHILST these events were passing, the Assembly at Versailles was at work upon the new Constitution which the Third Estate had promised France in the tennis-court on 20th June. What we have known as the States-General and then as the National Assembly must henceforth be called the Constituent, or Constitution-making body. After 27th June it contained all three orders, forming an unwieldy House of about twelve hundred members. Wiser than the English Parliament, they gave the best hours of the morning to their debates, but as they were quite inexperienced in the arts of political life after so many centuries of despotism, they mostly read their speeches. They did not rise to speak in their places like members of the English Legislature, but each speaker in turn mounted a kind of platform called the tribune. The combined effect of these arrangements, with the delay between the speeches, and the reading—often through spectacles, —of replies that had been written before the delivery of the speeches they attempted to answer,

took all the animation out of the debates and must occasionally have given them the air of a formal meeting of some scientific association. But sometimes for weeks together the galleries were so full of an excited public, and the business before the House, though calling for the calmest debate, proved so intensely provocative, that the place resembled a great public meeting quite beyond control.

At first the Assembly was divided into large committees of about forty members, who met in the evening to prepare business for the next morning's debate. These bureaux were soon discontinued, but it remained customary to appoint smaller committees to prepare reports on subjects that came up for legislation. The most important of these, in July 1789, was the Constitution Committee. They have been much blamed for spending time in discussing a preamble to the Constitution, the famous Declaration of the Rights of Man. In reality it was a wise thing to do. No such assembly had met before; the instructions drawn up by the constituencies prefigured a great constructive work; these men from all parts, who mostly did not previously know one another and who had a political system to erect, without any common political tradition of accepted principles to guide them, would have wasted much time later if they had not first come to some definite understanding of the lines upon which they could agree to build.

The political theory at the base of the Declaration that was finally adopted by the Assembly, was a

form of the doctrine of a Social Contract which had been popularised in France by Rousseau. Early men had lived by the law of Nature, but finding this an abstraction which did not guarantee the possibility of its provisions, they formed a compact, out of which, directly or indirectly according to the form of the theory adopted, came government. The contract and the government merely aimed at enforcing the law of Nature, though the very attempt at enforcing it, seeing that it was a law of liberty, necessarily involved giving some of it up. Still, as the law of Nature was the ideal to be aimed at, the first thing needful was to state its principles, on which were based the Rights of Man.

The Rights of Man, which Nature meant for him and government was to endeavour to secure to him, were described in the Declaration as Liberty, Property, Security, and Resistance to oppression. It is easy enough to see that this is a faulty list. What, for instance, is meant by "security" that is not secured by the other provisions. Security for what? Moreover, the right to property cuts off the liberty of one's neighbours to make use of certain things, but the Declaration contains no sufficient guide as to where the line is to be drawn between the two rights. How long may a man be locked up for stealing a loaf? What may be privately owned? Not men, presumably, since they are to be free and equal, but how far does liberty permit me to drive a bargain with a starving man for the hours of his day, the ground he lives on, the water

he drinks? These questions are in advance of the Constituent Assembly.

Some of the "Rights" are more definite. The law is to be the same for all; that is to say, the whole system of privilege is to go overboard. By another article the sovereignty of the people was proclaimed; "all the citizens have a right to co-operate, either personally or through their representatives," in the making of laws. This article was quickly violated by the Assembly, since a property qualification was fixed for the franchise. Yet if we consider the feudal France in which this declaration was put forth, it is plain that a revolutionary change was intended.

After the Declaration of Rights came the debate on the Constitution, which took all September. There had been no serious opposition to the Declaration, but the Constitutional debates evolved opposing parties. On the extreme Right were the most thoroughgoing Conservatives; on the extreme Left were a few men whom nothing but a level democracy could satisfy. Neither of these extreme parties had much influence. The aristocratic Conservatives had no great leaders. They had only Maury, the clever brazen sophist who long after died a Cardinal, Cazalès, a vehement engaging speaker with no brain to spare for anything else, and poor "Barrel" Mirabeau, so called from his conviviality, who begged his brother the great orator not to grudge him the only vice he had not monopolised himself.

Such were the extreme aristocratic royalists; they

did not always show much attachment to Louis XVI; "Perish the King but not the monarchy" is a phrase the world owes to Cazalès. The men of the extreme Left had no more influence as yet than the men of the extreme Right, but France was to drift in their direction, so they must be noticed. Their principal spokesmen, very quiet, however, for the present, were two lawyers, Pétion and Robespierre. Both were lawyers, both were men of unalterable opinions; but Robespierre was the more dogmatic, the more courageous, the more inhumanly unwavering of the two, though of strong humanitarian views; he had resigned a judgeship in his native town of Arras because he did not approve capital punishment. He presented the appearance of a thin, precise gentleman, with sometimes a rather formal smile, a man frequently preoccupied. Robespierre and Pétion were not destined eventually to be of the same party, but the men with whom they were later to act would all have been too Radical for any place in the National Assembly except the extreme Left.

Besides these extremes there were two Centre parties, between whom was the real struggle in the Constitutional debates of September 1789. The Right Centre had a dignified, magisterial, high-principled oracle in Mounier. He was a man of real ability but, whilst much revered by his province of Dauphiné, which declined to fetter him with instructions when he was elected to represent them, he could never arrive at any sort of understanding with

men of greater ability and less principle. He came to the States-General with great prestige, and we remember him as taking a good initiative on the memorable occasion of the meeting in the tennis-court. In these debates of September he was to do his best to give to the new Constitution an English form; for though at the outset he gave up the idea of having ministers in the House, this concession was not then understood to be alien to the real spirit of the English Constitution, since the dependence of ministers on a Parliamentary majority was never admitted as a principle of the Constitution by the Tory friends of George III. Mounier stood out for the Royal Veto, for a House of Lords, and for the King's power to dissolve Parliament.

These plans were opposed by the Left Centre. The leaders of this party were Barnave, a young and enthusiastic marquis, who was a great orator, the soldier Lameth, and, third, a member of the old Parlement de Paris, named Duport, a very deep lawyer. Different as they were in everything else these three agreed in their Constitutional views and became known as the Triumvirate. The Constitution which actually resulted from these debates was in accord with the views of Barnave and his followers.

The two greatest men in the Assembly were not to be reckoned among either of the parties. Sieyès kept aloof in his political science. Probably at the meeting of the States-General he was the most famous member of the Third Estate; he had just written his pamphlets on the position of the Third

Estate. He was the proposer of the motion of the 17th June, by which the Commons called themselves the National Assembly, and throughout the struggle that followed he maintained his lead, capping the utterances of Mirabeau and Bailly after the royal sitting. But in September his influence had already declined. His version of the Rights of Man had not been adopted, and his proposal to make State property of the tithes instead of giving them to the landlords was also rejected. He was, in fact, not the kind of man who leads assemblies, although he was the most comprehensive and original political thinker present. He was one of the driest of men, with no geniality; he had a weak voice; his intellect was vastly out of proportion to his personality, and many who could not appreciate his wonderful brain, to which Bonaparte afterwards admitted himself a debtor for expedients, were able to scoff at the vanity of a man who said without a touch of humour that he had completed the science of politics.

The other great man was Mirabeau. He had everything that Sieyès lacked; he could literally dominate by voice and eye mobs thirsting for his blood; he collected about him and attached to his career clever men whose ideas and suggestions he used as effectively as Napoleon used armies. His past was all against him; there was not a commandment in the code of respectability, or for that matter in the code of honour, that he had not broken. Yet he shouldered his infamy as Samson shouldered the city gates, and at one time nearly

controlled the Revolution. His conviction was that a strong executive was necessary, but until the executive would agree to his domination he could not find his natural place; meanwhile he interposed in debate to urge his views, to assert his superiority and to make his genius known to those he meant should purchase it. He had the kind of ability that can decide votes in a crisis and was bound to fight on the side of parliamentary government, since his power depended entirely on his dominance of the Assembly. He wanted the English Cabinet system established; he could then have been Prime Minister and in the position of Chatham or Pitt; at once leading the House and controlling the executive, he would have been perfectly at home. This was generally understood, and the fear of his ambition was one main cause of the rejection of his proposals.

The Parliamentary Cabinet having been ruled out, the question of the power of dissolution was settled by limiting the duration of the Legislature to two years; there would have been little object in insisting on the right of dissolution. The debates on an Upper Chamber and the royal veto caused more excitement in the galleries, especially the debates on the veto. There was a conference between the opposing parties, but Mounier would not accept the compromise which was offered. When it came to voting, the proposal for an Upper House was lost by a union of the extreme Right with the two parties of the Left, because many aristocrats objected to raising above themselves a

Senate in which they could not all have places. The only part of his plan which Mounier was able to save was the suspensive veto. He had desired the absolute veto; but it was decided that the King should be able by refusing his sanction to a law, to have it rejected, not absolutely, but until two legislatures had sent it up to him.

One of the most important acts of the Constituent was the abolition of the old provinces of France. We have seen in Chapter II that as political or administrative districts these provinces were worse than useless; they made oppression intolerable by adding to it the inscrutable hazards of chaos. Moreover, the Constituent was under the necessity of elaborating a system of electoral divisions for the new Legislature, and it would have been absurd to have one set of local boundaries for administration and another set for parliamentary constituencies. It was therefore decided to give the country an effective electoral and administrative scheme. The plan which Sieyès proposed was to have a number of Departments much as we see them on the French maps of to-day and to have nine districts called Communes in each department for local government. The declining influence of the great theorist was exemplified by the alteration of this plan. Instead of 720 communes, the Assembly decided to have 44,000. This was a mistake, for, as Lord Acton says, "the political wisdom of the village was substituted for that of a town or district of 35,000 inhabitants." This mistake, however, was much

easier to remedy than the disorder which it superseded. A group of communes formed a canton, whilst between the canton and the department came the district, with a governing body of its own.

The disappearance of the historic names and boundaries need not mislead us into the supposition that local patriotism was being destroyed. It was, on the contrary, being created. In England, with our intricate overlapping of districts and comparative absence of co-ordination in local public services, we can hardly conceive the public spirit that is developed by distinctness and simplicity.

CHAPTER IX

REMOVAL TO PARIS

WHILST these debates were going on at Versailles, there was a multitudinous hubbub of criticism and suggestion both in the public galleries and outside the hall of the Assembly, as well as at Paris. The greatest excitement was about the veto. By this time all the machinery of popular political agitation was at work, the mass meeting, the demonstration, the deputation, the press, the pamphlet, the strike; of all such things Paris and Versailles continued throughout those weeks to present a kaleidoscopic panorama.

We have seen how Paris was fluttering with pamphlets when the States-General met, when those of Sieyès bore away the palm. Among the journalists and pamphleteers Mirabeau soon began to take part with his vast energy. Scarcely had the States-General met when he set up a newspaper called the *Journal des États Généraux*, in which he made scathing attacks on the government. His paper was no sooner suppressed than he started another; nobody could prevent a deputy writing to his constituents; Mirabeau ran a journal therefore

under the name of *Count Mirabeau's Letters to his Constituents.* Loustallot, an orator of the Palais Royal, edited a sheet called the *Revolutions of Paris.* First issued three days after the fall of the Bastille, it soon reached a circulation of 200,000—no mean total if we consider how few could read. Camille Desmoulins, who had called the people to arms on the 12th July, was the liveliest of all the journalists, but it took him some time to find a publisher. In November he got out his *Revolutions of France and of Brabant.* There was much intimidation in the streets in those days, sometimes to the extent of hanging the men who, some rightly and some wrongly, were accused of crimes against the people. The public lamps hung across the streets by ropes handy for the lynchers. Camille was mischievous enough to call himself Procurator of the Lamp-Iron, but his articles, though quite as effective, were not so wicked as his title.

A still more influential writer was Marat, by profession a doctor, whose *Friend of the People* began to appear in September. He took up from the first the cause of the poor; the temporising of moderate parties enraged him, as did the perpetual menace of reaction. Borrowing from the governments of the past the fatally simple notion that a rotten society can be cured by the execution of malefactors, he early cried out for blood. He was physically repulsive through skin disease, a fact worth mentioning, since it has prejudiced people against him. He was a starved and a hunted

creature from 1789 till a few weeks before his death in July 1793. He was destined to play an important part in the coming three years. His leading political idea was a dictatorship on behalf of the masses.

But the interest of the people in the debates of September was not merely stimulated by writers. It was played upon by speakers and to a great extent provoked by the extreme Conservatives and the court. Behind a part of the agitation there was a deliberate intrigue of men who hoped to rise to power by substituting the Duke of Orleans for Louis. The Duke, in spite of his dilapidated character, might have had better fortune upon the throne than Louis. He would have commenced as a constitutional monarch, and he would probably have been surrounded by a court in sympathy with the new system, instead of being bound up with the old; above all, his wife would not have been Marie Antoinette. Nobody could suspect him of conscientious reluctance, and he was a menacing though contemptible figure at Versailles by the end of September 1789.

But without these intrigues there would yet have been trouble in October. There were still about the King, led by the Queen, people whom the logic of heredity and education had predestined to be the opponents of change. This faction had been defeated on 27th June, and again on 14th July; gradually they relaid the lines of policy, and in concert with the party of Maury and Cazalès in the

Assembly brought about another crisis. Their plan was delay. Two things helped them. In the first place the fear of bankruptcy, against which primarily the States-General had been summoned to provide, still overshadowed France; if the Assembly failed to avert it, there might be civil war, there might be a reaction against the Assembly; in either case the work of innovation would be disturbed. Secondly, Louis XVI was himself a good implement for a policy of delay. He refused his sanction to the new decrees. Louis was still popular with the bulk of the people. For whatever they disliked they blamed the Queen and the courtiers. The King only wanted rescuing from that clique; he wished well to the poor; they recollected his earlier reforms; they believed that he had given orders for the burning of the castles in August. The King therefore had still to be counted with, and, if the Assembly could be got to bungle sufficiently, might reassert his position. Maury said openly that he voted against any contrivance that would fit the Constitution for practical use; he even voted for the most revolutionary proposals provided they were sufficiently unwise; he thought a Second Chamber would have given the Constitution a chance, and therefore, Conservative as he was, he joined with Robespierre to secure its rejection.

Such were the schemes at Versailles, but wakeful eyes were in Paris. We have seen that in July the electoral committees, chosen to select the members of the States-General, had assumed control. These had given place to a new elected municipality of

Three Hundred, five for each of the sixty sections of Paris. Bailly was mayor and Lafayette commander of the National Guard; both of them belonged to that moderate revolutionary party, the Left Centre, that was making the Constitution.

Paris did not put itself blindly into the hands of these men. The districts were fountains of power; they had sent their representatives to Versailles, but that did not exhaust their political vitality; they had made a new municipality after the fall of the Bastille, but many of them still continued to meet locally as clubs, watching events, discussing possibilities, and ready to pour forth energy for creating new political institutions and for propelling new revolutionary mechanism.

One of the most important was the small district of the Cordeliers, south of the Seine. Here Danton, the burly friend of Desmoulins, became a leading spirit. He was a young lawyer, most practical and capable, personally genial and hearty, but soon to become a name of terrible power.

During this year the populace never quite effaced itself. After the fall of the Bastille, barricades were erected and the city was prepared for defence against the royal forces. Some retribution was done upon contractors and speculators responsible for the spreading starvation, Foulon, who had made the famous joke about letting the people eat grass, being one of the victims of the lamp-iron. Food was scarce all the summer, and even after the harvest anybody walking in the streets of Paris

became familiar with a sight of ill-omen,—long queues of the famishing who stood nightly at the bakers' doors. At the beginning of October, then, with obstruction reduced to a science in the Assembly and at court, with bankruptcy and starvation always hovering, with a large part of the nation already taking the law into its own hands and the most inflammatory stuff to be heard at the Palais Royal or to be read in the journals, there required only some special provocation and some timely leading to produce a fresh upheaval in the capital. The very continuance of the Revolution at that moment seemed to depend upon some such event.

The provocation was supplied on 1st October. For some time there had been suggestions in Paris that the King was too far away; rumours became frequent of a court plan to remove to some provincial centre from which war could be made on the rebellious capital. At Metz the Marquis de Bouillé had an army and the roads from Paris were lined with troops.

Versailles meanwhile was being reinforced. On 1st October the regiment of Flanders came to the palace and the officers were entertained at a banquet by the officers of other regiments. The proceedings were disastrously indiscreet, and everything done in the Palace at Versailles leaked out through the servants and was retailed by the agitators of the Palais Royal. At Paris it was realised as a climax when the news of these banquets became public. The scenes lost nothing in the description, though

they needed little adornment. The starving people heard of the extravagance of illumination and champagne; the politicians and all who were interested in the continuance of the Assembly and its work, every tradesman who dreaded bankruptcy and civil war, heard with a startling access of lucidity that when the festival reached its height the King and Queen appeared in the hall of banquet, distributed the white cockades of royalism, accepted the homage of the trampling underfoot of those tricolour cockades which the nation had adopted for its badge, and produced a fury of anti-revolutionary loyalism that gave away the whole plot. What were the intentions of the court? For what purpose were the troops being massed? Now all seemed clear.

The banquets took place on the 1st and 3rd October. The 4th was a Sunday and the democratic leaders, especially Danton and Marat, made the most of it; by nightfall a host of citizens had prepared for the march on Versailles. Early the next day a crowd of women appeared in front of the Hôtel de Ville, some waving torches and threatening to burn the building. These women were the mothers of starving families; their levy was one of the inarticulate cries of the time; it was quickly directed by more cunning hands.

The simplicity of the women at the Hôtel de Ville was manifest. Their homes were blank with starvation and they were bent on violent redress. The municipal headquarters were an obvious objective. If they could get at the responsible persons they

would make an example, but they did not plunder; parcels of bank-notes were taken but were brought back.

There was at the Hôtel de Ville a man named Maillard, who had been prominent in the attack of the Bastille. He harangued the women and persuaded them that not the municipality but the Palace at Versailles was the position to be attacked.

As the morning advanced, the results of the previous day's harangues became evident. People were passing from street to street, recruiting bands of women and some men. The cry of "Bread! bread!" began to resound. Then, beginning from the Hôtel de Ville, arose the shout "A Versailles." All classes in the city rallied their powers; Lafayette, the commander of the National Guard, attempted to check the tumult; but Maillard had already marshalled the first band of women for the long march to Versailles. A girl with a kettle-drum gave spirit and unison to the column, and one of the great days of the Revolution had clearly dawned.

The Marquis de Lafayette was the man upon whom responsibility fell as commander of the military force of Paris. Though not a man of great ability he was famous for his friendship with Washington and his part in the American War of Independence. This prominence in such a cause, combined with a great reputation for political virtue and experience, marked him for early responsibility in the French Revolution. As commander of the National Guard he represented the great middle-class power that

had the double task of rousing the people and keeping the people in hand. The preparations and obstructions of the court were endangering national solvency and the middle-class revolution. The rising of the people, carefully engineered, might give the opportunity for the municipal authorities and their bourgeois National Guard to assume responsibility and control.

Lafayette himself had for some time shown an inclination to hold the balance, if not to restrain the progress of revolution. He was for a stronger executive than the Constituent was establishing. He was therefore beginning to be suspected and feared by both sides, and whilst he hesitated at Paris, with the National Guard under arms, and the city emptying towards Versailles, the orders that came to him from the municipal authorities upon whom he was trying to throw back responsibility, showed that he was expected to make himself a kind of Dictator for the time being and to commit himself irrevocably against the court. He sent a message of warning to Versailles, and declared that he would proceed thither at the head of the guard, but the guard itself became impatient, and it was when he could no longer restrain them, that he at length ordered the march to Versailles.

When it was known at Versailles that Maillard and the women and their train were approaching, some of them declaring their intention of tearing the Queen piecemeal, there was anxiety in the Assembly. They arrived at about four o'clock, an hour before

Lafayette left Paris. Until nearly midnight, therefore, Versailles would be in the hands of the Parisians. Mounier the fastidious was temporary President of the Assembly, though, as we have seen, his plans for an Upper Chamber and a royal veto had been rejected during the previous month. Mirabeau, who had intrigues everywhere, knew beforehand of the march; he had advised Mounier to adjourn, but Mounier thought it would be ignominious. Mounier was in fact more afraid of Lafayette than of Maillard, perhaps because with his English leanings he thought of the usurpation of the army in the English civil war.

The women arrived. Drenched with rain, dead-beat with a long day's tramp, they cried out for bread in the streets of Versailles. Some of them crowded after Maillard, who was admitted to the Assembly; they sank wearied out upon the benches beside the members. Most went on to the palace, where they waited, a dismal dripping crowd before the gates.

In the Assembly Maillard was being heard, and Mounier was trying to make him use parliamentary language, whilst the influx of women became continually more alarming. They called for food, threatened some of the deputies, fraternised with others, and were inclined to embrace the grave Mounier.

It was decided to send a deputation to the King, to request his attention to the prevailing distress, and Mounier, nothing loth, departed at the head of it. The draggled multitude in the street saw him

and twelve women disappear behind the great gates of the Palace.

He found the King in council with Necker and others. For hours they discussed the situation whilst the mob waited beneath the windows, and Lafayette was long in coming. Earlier in the day the King had been advised to fly; when it was too late, he had agreed. The way in which the politicians used popular pressure was exemplified in Mounier's success in getting Louis to make his long-delayed acceptance of the Declaration of the Rights of Man.

At about ten o'clock Mounier made this announcement to the Assembly, whom he summoned for a night sitting that lasted until two o'clock. But the Assembly was not the scene of that night's principal business. The crowd under the Palace windows became angry as the darkness settled down and no reply came out to them. The guards within expected an attack, which would have been formidable, as the disbanded troops that had assisted in the capture of the Bastille were thick in the crowd. At length, in the middle of the night, arrived the National Guard, and Lafayette was admitted to the King's presence. As he entered some one cried "Cromwell!"

The events of the night were only beginning. The National Guard was outside the gates and performed the double function of keeping out the people and keeping in the royal family; thus symbolising the policy of the middle class. But

a little before dawn some hungry individuals of the crowd, prowling continually, came upon a forgotten door in the outer wall, and admitted the multitude. Soon every part of the building was full of their tumult. A faithful Swiss guarded the Queen's door, and was clubbed with a rifle whilst Marie Antoinette fled hastily to the King's chamber. One door of her room was broken before she was out of the other.

The National Guard was admitted, and the royal family were then protected, but for several hours the King held council whilst a surging mass threatened from below. At last Louis gave way on the essential point; he appeared on the balcony and professed himself willing that the court should be removed to Paris. For a few moments the Queen was probably in great danger; there is little doubt that she had narrowly escaped murder, and the sea of enemies awaited her without the windows. Then it was that Lafayette, who seemed to represent the Revolution, threw them off the scent by a well-acted dumb-show. To give an impression that some satisfactory assurance had been received from the Queen, he drew her forth to the balcony and kissed her hand before the multitude. The ruse succeeded. Although the royal family, in their lumbering carriage, surrounded by their conquerors, spent a most wretched day getting to Paris, they entered the city safely and took up their residence in the Tuileries.

CHAPTER X

THE CONSTITUENT IN PARIS

THE conquest of the royal family on 5th and 6th October was the last of the three conflicts of 1789. The first victory was the vindication of the claim that the Three Estates should vote together; the second was the capture of the Bastille; the third has been recounted in the previous chapter. It completed the triumph of the Assembly; its results were decisive in so far that the Constitution was completed according to the will of the middle-class majority, and the court was unable to make any effective resistance. Thrice in one year the controversy between the court and the Assembly had come to a calculation of opposing physical forces. In June the King had given way because he could not depend on the troops; in July and in October there had been actual fighting. For nearly two years there was no more question of opposing force to force, for the court was in Paris unable to stir.

What was destroyed in October 1789 was the type of royalty established by Louis XIV; we may call it Grand-Monarchism; it had lasted a little over a hundred years. With the removal of the

rich and crowded though most artificial court life, the town of Versailles and its satellite Marly declined; Marly has almost been swallowed up again by green Nature; you can still be shown over the palace, but no attempt has been made to preserve the character of the region. A museum, a hotel, a school of agriculture have taken the place of royal abodes and gardens.

Of the shackled monarchy in the Tuileries from October forward we get a fair description as to externals from the trusty pen of Arthur Young. After his travels in the east and south-east among the château-burnings and those rumours of brigands, he arrived in January 1790 at Paris. He thus describes the fallen state of the Bourbons:—

"After breakfast, walk in the gardens of the Thuilleries, where there is the most extraordinary sight that either French or English eye could ever behold at Paris. The King walking with six grenadiers of the *milice bourgeoise*, with an officer or two of his household and a page. The doors of the gardens are kept shut in respect to him, in order to exclude everybody but deputies, or those who have admission tickets. When he entered the palace, the doors of the gardens were thrown open for all without distinction, though the Queen was still walking with a lady of her court. She also was attended so closely by the *gardes bourgeoises*, that she could not speak, but in a low voice, without being heard by them. A mob followed her, talking very loud, and paying no other apparent respect

than that of taking off their hats wherever she passed, which was indeed more than I expected. Her Majesty does not appear to be in health; she seems to be much affected and shows it in her face; but the King is as plump as ease can render him."

The fall of the Bastille had caused the first emigration, which had continued sporadically during the château-burning of August; the fall of the Versailles monarchy gave occasion for a second. Those who had fled in July were d'Artois and the more impatient of the privileged nobles, the extreme court party who had been plotting a *coup d'état*; far more moderate people went in October, the most prominent being Mounier; for not only was Grand-Monarchism down, but all hopes of a French Toryism were defeated likewise. But although Mounier and his friends went abroad in despair of their country, the King had on the other hand the satisfaction of getting rid of d'Orléans, who had been compelled to accept an embassy. His complicity in the plots on his behalf has never been proved, but his departure was the removal of a danger.

These were the losers: but who had won? The Assembly had again made use of "seditious allies"; again the resistance of the court had been violently overcome: have we any means of deciding whether the middle class or the people as a whole reaped the benefit? We certainly have; the decrees of the Assembly after October give the answer quite as clearly as the National Guards and the formation of bourgeois municipalities had given it in July. In

July, Sieyès had introduced the distinction between active and passive citizens, by which all who did not pay a certain amount in taxes were excluded from the National Guard and from the franchise; in December, by a new municipal law, the distinction was carried through the whole system of local government; the great mass of the people came under the description of "passive" citizens. The Assembly, in its new hall at the Tuileries, whither it had followed the King, continued its old work. It could, indeed, go further in the policy of restriction. As the King could no longer collect an army, the force of the crowd was no longer necessary to the Assembly. A kind of Riot Act was accordingly passed under which certain officials might at any time proclaim Martial Law; to restrain the forces of agitation a censorship was established over newspapers and public meetings and even over the sale of literature. In the country places the tendency to restriction went almost the length of reaction, and a fresh impetus was given to revolt by a series of decrees which aimed at the re-establishment of feudalism in some essential points. It will be convenient to describe later the Constitution which gradually arose amid the debates of 1789 and 1790, but these examples of its character show plainly that the combatants of 14th July and those who imperilled themselves by rebellion in October did not gain as a class by their deeds. It was not a democracy that was assuming shape in the legislation that followed.

The framing of the new Constitution was one of the two tasks which the Assembly was called upon to achieve. It was the greater of the two, but not the more pressing. The other task was to avert bankruptcy.

If the Assembly failed in this urgent financial duty they would be in as weak a position as Louis XVI when he called the States-General; they would be as much weaker as their constitutional position was less rooted in tradition and precedent; the King would be able to dismiss them with impunity, for the country would cease to support them. The fear of national bankruptcy is a very weighty excuse for the way in which the Assembly worked for the benefit of the capitalists. At present the whole nation looked upon the Assembly as the great security that the danger would be averted; it had been part of the deliberate plan of d'Artois and the other enemies of the Assembly in July to produce by their *coup d'état* bankruptcy and civil war, which they hoped would put a stop to constitutional reform. The plot was defeated by the taking of the Bastille; the great financier was recalled; the Assembly remained. But the great financial task of the Assembly likewise remained.

The task of the Assembly was almost identically the task which had faced both Turgot and Calonne. Money was to be obtained somewhere; it could only be obtained from the privileged orders. In one respect only was the problem of the Assembly more simple than that of Louis XVI's ministers had

been. The Assembly, by means of the revolutionary populace of Paris, had thrice humbled the court, in June without striking a blow, in July by a blow struck at a fortress, in October by the capture of the persons of the royal family.

When Turgot, Calonne or Necker proposed to attack privilege, the classes menaced could influence Louis through the court and the Queen. When the menace came from the Assembly the King was still exposed to the same influences, but he could no longer be persuaded to send the Assembly about its business as he had sent his ministers about theirs. The Assembly was, for the nonce, master.

Political action, however, in representative assemblies will follow the line of least resistance; strong interests will never be attacked when the pillage of the weaker will serve the same purpose. The money had to be got from those who had it; therefore the nobles or the clergy must pay; which was it to be? There was little doubt that the Church would prove the easier prey.

Among the nobles there was a much greater solidarity of interest; their interest was that of all landlords. Among the clergy solidarity did not exist, and it was easy to destroy what there was. Nearly all the wealth of the Church was in the hands of the rich bishops and abbots; the poorer clergy were only better off than the peasants because their work was lighter; they had scarcely anything but religion in common with their wealthy superiors, and they had scarcely that if all that was said of those

rich ecclesiastics were true. A small salary from the State would more than compensate the poorer clergy for all they were likely to lose by the confiscation of Church property. In the Assembly, where there were 621 of the Third Estate, 285 nobles, and 308 clergy, only just over a hundred of the clergy belonged to the wealthy class. The majority in mere votes would be larger for victimising the rich clergy than the majority against any other order of men.

In the second place, it was possible very plausibly to separate the interest of the wealthy ecclesiastics from the landed interest as a whole, and this weakened the support which they could look for from outside their own order as contrasted with the support which could be counted on by the nobles as individual landowners. For these abbots and bishops were not private landowners but privileged corporations, and the case had already gone against corporations in the tribunal of opinion when the guilds and corporations had been abolished in the towns.

Lastly, the class of men who sat in the National Assembly was the class in which the eighteenth-century rationalism was most effectively rooted. In their eyes ecclesiastical property was property held for purposes of superstition ; it was not the property of individuals, but a trust held in consideration of certain services which had possessed a social value in the opinion of times past ; there was the less reason why such property should not be diverted

into channels where it could be of immediate and indeed of paramount use to the nation.

In voting power, therefore, in the strength which comes from solidarity with a widespread economic interest, and lastly, both as corporations and as religious institutions, in point of popular support, the clergy were weaker than the nobles. It was with their property, accordingly, that the gulf must be filled.

Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, was one of the most secular-minded men who ever lived; he was the sort of cleric who became a bishop in the last years of the old régime; his real turn was for diplomacy, of which, since his death, he has become the patron saint. The man who afterwards knew precisely the moment for abandoning Napoleon, saw now clearly that the clergy could not keep their wealth. He was not a democrat; he had caused to be communicated to the King in July a plan for a strong reactionary ministry to be formed by *coup d'état*; still less was he a believer in apostolic poverty. It was simply as an astute politician that on 10th October he brought forward his motion for the property of the Church to be transferred to the State. Out of this proposal arose two of the principal features of the revolutionary period, the Civil Constitution of the clergy, and, second, the Assignats.

The Assembly, having undertaken to pay the clergy, and confiscated the property of the Church, found itself compelled by the situation it thus created to assume a more thorough control of the institution

with which it had interfered; partly because some of the clergy, and especially the monks, began to intrigue against the power that had expropriated them; partly because it was impossible for the French Revolution to interfere with any institution, without proceeding to stamp it with the character of the opinions then current. Whilst starting out merely to find money, the National Assembly had brought upon itself the task of constructing a Civil Constitution for the clergy.

This work occupied the members from 29th March to 12th July 1790. The number of bishops was greatly reduced, each department becoming a diocese; the bishops and other clergy were to be elected by the people. Here was an unpardonable defiance of the Roman Catholic system, the very essence of which is hierarchy, authority, and continuity. The wonder is that the Pope did not officially condemn the Civil Constitution of the clergy until the spring of 1791.

The other measure that arose from Talleyrand's motion was the financial expedient known as "Assignats." These notes were simply an inconvertible government stock: in 1790 they were given an enforced currency as legal tender. The tendency of a government which can issue paper money—that is, promises to pay coin, without allowing the promise to be claimed at will by the bearers of the paper,—the tendency of such a government is to issue too much. This temptation to inflate the currency was felt most intensely by the French government owing

to the great demand which the war made on its resources. The assignats followed from the confiscation of Church property, because the Church lands were made the security for the debt incurred by issuing them. This debt was to be cancelled bit by bit through the sale of portions of the land, the purchasers being allowed to give assignats for it. The evils that arose from the system will appear as we go on.

The wisdom of such a policy was doubted by some of the ablest politicians. Necker was among those who disapproved; he took the opportunity of retiring from office, and left the country. Thus ended the career of the statesman on whom at the meeting of the States-General every eye was fixed, whose removal had been regarded by the enemies of the Revolution as a necessary part of their scheme, and whose restoration after the fall of the Bastille had been a pledge to the nation that the Counter-Revolution was averted. Necker was not a man for revolutions; with a sound foresight he withdrew from scenes for which he was not fitted; the occasion for his retirement, his disapproval of the policy that prevailed, was honourable, and only if he had felt in himself the power to save his country, would it have been his duty to remain in office.

The great advocate of assignats was Mirabeau. To him it seemed that, as he expressed it himself, "wheresoever an assignat is found, there, surely, will repose with it a secret prayer for the credit of the assignats, a desire for their solidity." As time went

on more and more of these bonds were issued until the currency came to consist of them, and the revolutionary government to depend on them. Laws which we shall have to notice later maintained their value during the critical years; the enemies of France attempted to ruin her by a wholesale secret importation of forged assignats; nobody can understand the Revolution on its financial side without concentrating attention on the paper currency.

Closely connected with this subject is another which we have already noted as one of the principal problems of our study. Attention has already been drawn to the question of the distribution of land in France. It has been observed that many small properties existed before the Revolution and that the repudiation of feudal services and rents practically created many more. The vast extent of the confiscated lands of the Church makes it necessary to examine whether these too became the property of peasants, if we would understand the effects of the Revolution upon the economic and social development of France.

The answer is that the extreme need of ready money impelled the authorities to sell the confiscated lands in great quantities and to those who could pay for them. A great deal of speculative buying took place, and even foreign companies joined in the scramble. We may conclude that whilst the popular view that the Revolution covered France with small holdings is untenable as a complete theory, it contains some truth, since the gain of

individual peasants from the downfall of feudalism was very considerable. But the great confiscations, first of Church property and afterwards of the property of emigrant nobles, did little to help this tendency, and the equalising effect of the Revolution is immensely overrated in the popular view. The confiscations turned mainly to the advantage of well-to-do persons looking out for investments.

The debates on the Church were concluded on 12th July 1790. July 14th was the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille. A great festival was arranged for the commemoration of that event. Delegations came from all parts of France to the Feast of the Federation, from every department, from all the National Guards of the municipalities, from the fleet, and from every regiment of the army. In the midst of the Champ de Mars, in a vast space which the spontaneous labour of all classes and every age and sex of the Parisians had levelled, cleared and terraced, Talleyrand, "assisted by two hundred priests in tricolour scarves," celebrated Mass at a lofty altar. The King, the Assembly, the nation, were present; all took the oath to preserve the Constitution as it should be settled by the National Assembly. The enthusiasm was not confined to Paris; everywhere the National Guards and the municipalities fraternised; it was an orgie of music and flowers and goodwill.

Festivals could do nothing to end the real conflicts of class interest that traversed in every direction the foundations of the rising edifice of a new social

order; yet they signified a great deal. The political unity of France had been slowly appearing throughout the ages of her history; the Revolution completed the work of the dynasties and the Feast of the Federation symbolised the fact; loyalty to feudal lords had given place to the loyalty of a nation to itself. What was false to progress in the work of Louis XIV, his sham aristocracy, and his doctrine that the people existed for the monarch, had perished in October 1789; what was permanent, the order, the unity, the strength, lived again in July 1790.

Here again, however, the symbolism was accompanied by causation. As I have said of the actual fall of the Bastille, so too this festival in commemoration of the deed not only meant much but likewise produced great results. It was one of the ways in which the Revolution was consolidated, a mighty pulsation of its great heart, sending vitality through the veins of the national body. We have watched the spontaneous movements that surged hither and thither across the map, and, carrying the authorities with it as a runaway elephant might carry his driver, secured the break with feudalism. To these movements now succeeded a definite organisation. The delegates were in Paris to drink of the new spirit and carry back draughts to the provincial communities, to form connections in the Assembly and the clubs, to study the policy of the leaders, to hear the story of royal intrigues and be warned against plausible rumours.

The reaction of Paris on France was very marked in 1790. The Civil Constitution of the clergy was another phase of it. In every parish was a priest who either did or did not take the oath, and everywhere the issue was presented in sharp outline by the necessity of personal decision.

Lastly, political societies were a means of influencing the provinces. The Breton Club, which, after the great removal to Paris, held its meetings in the Hall of the Jacobin convent, became the scene of nightly debates, where all the greatest orators of the Assembly could be heard, and influenced opinion more than the more formal discussions of the Assembly itself. By its affiliated branches throughout the country it disseminated information and laid a firm and wide basis of power. We are now accustomed to political societies with local branches; their number and variety preserves the balance of opinion and the general diffusion of knowledge steadies it. But in France there had been nothing of the kind; the Jacobins were the first in the field; they carried all before them in every municipality where the forces of Revolution gained the upper hand. Pitt, from the other side of the Channel, watched with repugnance and alarm the rapid spread of "the liquid fire of Jacobinism."

CHAPTER XI

MIRABEAU

DURING all this while a struggle was developing on which the whole Revolution depended. The Constituent was gradually forming the new régime, but in the eyes of the greatest practical statesman among them their work was in danger of proving temporary. They were, it seemed to Mirabeau, so dividing, not to say splintering, the power of the executive, that the new Constitution would be in danger in three ways.

First, the King would be dissatisfied with his position, which would expose him to all the perils of pre-eminence without giving him any true command of the factors of power; secondly, the feebly organised administration would be unable to withstand the movements that would arise among the discontented half-enfranchised masses; thirdly, the forces of the nation could never be effectively wielded against a foreign enemy. It will be seen that in all these ways the Constitution, which has to be examined in a later chapter, did actually break down. The King and the court ran away from it, gave it for a time a feigned acceptance and support, finally called in the

foreigner to crush it: the populace shattered its flimsy barriers of legality, and amid scenes of turbulence and usurpation imposed their dictation upon its legislative assembly; the march of hostile ranks upon the fields and roads of France produced in violent response a ruthless concentration of power that knew neither mercy nor law.

The last political battles of Mirabeau, fought against heavy odds, were his attempt to put into the Constitution the executive strength which might have saved it. His policy was determined by two convictions: there must be a strong executive, and there must be Parliamentary control. In the first days of the States-General he had been entirely occupied with the fight for Parliamentary control, for the essentials of Constitutionalism. Despotism had been baffled in June, frightened in July, disarmed in October. To Mirabeau the Revolution was then complete and beyond controversy; his remaining months were spent in the struggle for a sufficient executive.

The earlier part of his course has already been traced; the work he achieved was not more important than the work of others; his aims were the aims of the men about him, and Mirabeau did not adapt himself sufficiently to the needs of party warfare to lead in appearance or in fact. But the second struggle was all his own.

He had early attempted to place himself in communication with the ministers and the court. In the early days of the States-General a friend obtained for him an interview with Necker in order

to explain proposals for meeting the political and financial crisis. Necker's manner was irritating and cool; he did not conceal his dislike of his visitor; "Have you anything to propose?" he inquired, nose in air. Rage mounted in the leonine Mirabeau; "I propose to wish you good morning," he replied; it was grandiosity repulsed by superciliousness.

As the year wore on, the discredited adventurer gradually acquired an extraordinary ascendancy in debate. He had the force and faculty which, when two courses lay open to a vacillating Assembly, could paint ruin on the one side and escape on the other so that ordinary men who feared responsibility dared not oppose their own judgment to the judgment of the confident orator. He could sway minds and control votes, even where he was regarded with suspicion. His unconquerable magnificence had struck the imagination of the crowd, and at the very time when he was doing his utmost in favour of royal power, the poor and ignorant surrounded him in the street and implored him to save them from the "Veto," as if it were some living dragon.

To Mirabeau his influence in the Assembly, his predominance at the Jacobins, his growing popularity, were but means to power; he played the demagogue to force himself upon the court. It is difficult to see what other road he could have taken, but his means in one important respect baffled his end. Power based upon the arts of the demagogue was only to be maintained by a continuance of those methods by which it had been acquired; but so

long as he continued the style of democratic invective, so long as he breathed fury against the minions of a court, it was impossible to gain the confidence of the King or the Queen; the necessity of attempting to strengthen a court which distrusted him and at the same time appearing to attack it, hampered him to the last.

After October 1789 he made overtures through the Count of Provence. He sent a note to the Count showing how dangerous would be the residence of the royal family in Paris when the bankruptcy and famine to be feared that winter should goad the populace to the fury of despair. He outlined a scheme of escape. The King was not to fly to a frontier town like Metz, as had been planned before October; that would appear like an appeal to foreign powers. Mirabeau suggested Rouen as a place where Louis could put himself decisively at the head of the Revolution, free from all suspicion of intimidation by the Parisian crowd. He could summon the National Assembly to a place chosen by himself, and his assent to their decrees would be acceptable because patently unforced.

Mirabeau's hope of influencing Provence depended mainly upon the persuasions of their common friend La Marck, the commander of Austrian troops in French service. The faithful intermediary did his best, but the Count of Provence, an accomplished classical scholar and shrewd epicurean spectator of the human drama, had no more fight in him now to steer a determined course, than years later when as

Louis XVIII he fled from the Tuileries at the news of Napoleon's outbreak from Elba.

A man whose alliance Mirabeau deemed important was Lafayette, who from October forward was for several months the most conspicuous and potentially the most influential man in France. But though the commander of the National Guard sometimes acted with Mirabeau, he could not be relied on to back him seriously. There were two deterrent considerations. Parsimonious, precise, and a little self-righteous, the admirer of Washington could not admire so smirched a genius as Mirabeau; he knew likewise that he would himself be dwarfed in the partnership. For a while Mirabeau tried to gain the Queen's ear through Lafayette; then he discovered that the general had no intention of advancing his interest; afterwards he gained access to Marie Antoinette through other channels. His attitude to Lafayette had varied; at one time he said everything he could to shock him, then he courted and flattered him; afterwards rivalry developed and he menaced him. The commander retorted in a sentence which spares one the necessity of painfully sketching his character: "I have overcome the King of England in his might, the King of France in his authority, the people in their fury; I shall not yield to Monsieur de Mirabeau." "He shall pay for it sooner or later," says Mirabeau.

In the spring of 1790 Mirabeau made his treaty with the court by the agency of La Marck, who had the confidence both of Marie Antoinette and of her

favourite adviser Count Mercy, the Austrian ambassador. He wrote his views for transmission to Louis; he pointed out that it was necessary to refrain from plots against the Constitutional system so far established by the Revolution; but he promised to do his utmost to secure for the King the greatest power that was compatible with Constitutionalism. In return his vast debts were to be paid by the King, a good income was to be assured him, and a large sum was to be given him at the end of the session if his efforts were considered satisfactory.

Marie Antoinette never trusted Mirabeau. His reputation alarmed her; his policy of refraining from plots for a Counter-Revolution went against her ruling passion and clearest intentions; his continued thunders against her party in the National Assembly, to veil his part and maintain his popularity, were considered by Her Majesty as so many efforts of a demagogue who merely wished to raise his price, but who might be more dangerous if unpaid.

The efforts of Mirabeau himself were immense. Dying of a complication of diseases, he never rested from seven in the morning till ten at night, kept open house for politicians whom he desired to influence, carried on a voluminous correspondence, including two long letters each week for the King full of advice and comment on the shifting current of affairs, controlled the foreign policy of the Assembly, and kept his hold on the debates both of the Assembly and the Jacobins. As often as not he spent his nights in pleasures nearly as exhausting as

the day, and after the King had begun to pay him, the extravagance of his dinners, his plate, his pictures, his library, made the possession of some secret fund an obvious matter for comment.

One of his greatest fights in the Assembly was in May 1790, in favour of leaving to the King the right of declaring peace or war. Mirabeau considered this an essential part of the prerogative that could not be surrendered. As he went down to the House the newsboys were shouting a placard "Treason of Count Mirabeau," but his bribery by the court had been so exploited before it was a fact that people were used to it. In the Assembly, however, the galleries cried out for his death. When he rose to speak the place was a pandemonium. In spite of this he secured a compromise on the subject of the resolutions. The Assembly was to declare peace or war, but only on the King's initiative.

For the first half of February 1791 he was President of the Assembly, and filled the position with a tact and a dignity that surprised every one; business went through in half the usual time.

"Silence, you thirty voices," he cried once, quieting the clamour of a whole party. This was towards the end of February, when the departure of the King's aunts for Italy caused a measure to be introduced making emigration illegal. "If such a law is passed," he declared, "I swear I will never obey it." That night he was attacked in the Jacobins by Duport and Lameth with the utmost virulence. Lameth in particular made every possible

point against his private character and painted him besides as a dangerous traitor. A foreigner who was present was so appalled by the cruelty in the tone of the applauding crowd that he was ill for days. Mirabeau, however, secured a hearing, turned every interruption successfully, and controlled the meeting before he sat down.

Such a life no mortal could long support, and by the end of March Mirabeau was dead. On his deathbed he expressed a wish that he could bequeath his head to his successors. "I carry in my heart the pall of the Monarchy," he said, "after my death its remains will be the spoil of the factions."

CHAPTER XII

VARENNES AND THE REACTION

FROM the court point of view Mirabeau might be of some use in the Assembly; at least he was too dangerous to be driven into complete opposition; but the policy of the Queen was quite different from that of the statesman. His advice indeed vacillated. When he was hopeful he thought the Assembly might be won over; at other times he advised the King to fly to the provinces and to put himself at the head of what royalism there was, even if it led to a civil war. But to the Queen's mind flight meant flight to the frontier, and war meant calling in foreign armies against France. During 1790 the court obtained a little more freedom of movement, and much of the summer was spent at St. Cloud, though they returned to the Tuileries in autumn, and all this time plans of escape were being discussed.

Apart from the more patriotic scheme of Mirabeau, there were two other plans. One was the scheme of the *émigrés*, who had made Coblentz their headquarters. Their figurehead was d'Artois and Calonne their busiest intriguer. Their prophet was Edmund Burke, whose fiery diatribe against the

Assembly and the new Constitution was published in November 1790. These men were not actuated so much by loyalty to Louis XVI as by an interested zeal for the old régime and for everything it had meant to them. They did not hesitate to enrage the French nation at critical moments when the position of the King and Queen was made extremely difficult and even their safety endangered by such provocation. Appeals were openly made to the Kings of Europe to invade France and rescue the King and Queen, though the step would probably have endangered their lives. Marie Antoinette understood this, and that her principal danger threatened from Coblentz. At one time she had been unwilling to leave Paris, where the King was well placed for exercising influence and watching events, but as the year went on without any advantage being gained, she too developed a scheme of war. Her plan, however, involved the flight of the royal family as a necessary preliminary. With this in view she had been corresponding with her brother the Emperor Leopold. But Austria was cautious and much occupied in watching Russia and Prussia, especially in regard to Polish affairs. Letters from Vienna therefore were not encouraging.

Two reasons decided the King and Queen to make their attempt in June 1791. The first was that 5th July was the date fixed for the election of the new Legislative Assembly. This election would provide the National Assembly with its legitimate successor and thus give strong confirmation to the

revolutionary work already accomplished. The second reason was a message from Mantua, whither the Count de Durfort had been sent to confer with Leopold. Unluckily, d'Artois and Calonne were there likewise, and Calonne, whose enterprising prodigality had made his ministry so calamitous, had not improved in exile. He drew up a document supposed to contain the intentions of Leopold, but never seen either by Leopold or d'Artois, though it well exemplified the policy of the *émigrés*. In it the King and Queen were requested to remain in Paris until, some time in the summer, an imperial army of 100,000 men should come to their relief. Soon after Durfort had returned with this spurious document, came a warning of the deception through the Austrian ambassador, but the flight was already planned.

In April the King had made an attempt to go to St. Cloud, in order, as was supposed, to attend the Easter celebrations of unconstitutional priests. It has also been suggested that he started ostentatiously forth in order that the people might stop him, and so the Assembly might be shamed into allowing him greater freedom of movement.

At least he was in earnest on 21st June. The story has often been told of the Swedish Count, who adored the Queen, waiting in the still courtyard in the small hours in coachman's disguise, of the false passport, the delays, the lumbering of the great carriage along hot roads far out into wooded country to Varennes, where Bouillé, the ambitious general who

expected to be a marshal of France for this day's work, had stationed his outposts to escort their Majesties to the safety of his camp. Nor is there need to retell the great and breakneck ride of the village postmaster Drouet, so gloriously told by Mr. Belloc.[1] The starless chase through bypaths of the woods to avoid Bouillé's patrols, and his passing of the carriage just before it reached the village of Varennes, the royal couple forced to spend the night in the house of the village grocer, and the attempts of some officers to persuade the King to break through at all risks; then the arrival of the official messengers from the Assembly and the turning back of the fugitives, and all within a few hundred yards of the inn where Bouillé's son was waiting for them, thinking they had postponed the journey again; all this crowds one of the fullest nights in French history.

What were the results of this fiasco? It certainly told against the royal cause to some extent, especially as the King had left on his table a letter carefully explaining his points of disagreement with the Constitution. The King was suspended from his functions; the Assembly went on with its work regardless of his sanction until September, when the new Constitution came into force. The word Republic began to be used more frequently and more openly than before, and that, too, just at the time of the elections for the new Legislative Assembly.

In spite of all this the next few months beheld not progress but reaction. Louis had indeed shaken the

[1] *Marie Antoinette.*

confidence of many who had hoped he would work the Constitution fairly; he had put himself into an ignominious plight, for the return journey was a miserable business for him: as to the Queen, her hair is said to have whitened within the four days. But though this event had its moral effect—and some historians are of the opinion that the flight made Louis impossible as a King,—still for the present the men who were alarmed by it into reaction were the more powerful and the more active.

First there was Lafayette. His conduct during the royal flight was more than suspicious. After receiving the startling news he waited till others pressed him to take action, and then his messenger, a tenant of his own, met with silly accidents that wasted much time. Had it not been for Drouet the fugitives would have escaped. Perhaps he thought the King, by going away of his own accord, was leaving the way open for a republic, but after the King's return he certainly did all he could to support the prerogative, a course he might have taken with better prospects if he had seen his way to co-operate with Mirabeau some months earlier.

In fact Mirabeau's ghost was ranging for revenge in another quarter likewise. No set of men had done more to wear out the great orator than the Triumvirs of the old Left Centre—Barnave, Lameth, and Duport. These men had carried out their policy of bourgeois monarchy completely; by them the Constitution had been shaped, in spite of Mounier's English programme and in spite of Mirabeau's

masterful endeavours to strengthen the executive. It was they whose attack on Mirabeau had been so fierce at the Jacobins. But now on these very men, Barnave and his associates, behold the departed prophet's mantle strangely descending.

Barnave had been one of the deputies appointed by the Assembly to reconduct the royal runaways to the Tuileries; it was he who had been given a seat in the carriage, and his conversion has been ascribed to pity and admiration for Marie Antoinette. But in sober fact he and his friends must have begun to realise that they had done their work too thoroughly for their purpose. That purpose was the ascendancy of the middle class; the use of popular riots was never a congenial resource. Now it seemed that the Constitution was endangered because their fear of the executive had been too great, and the King, as head of the executive, had been made contemptible. Barnave and his Left Centre having made the Constitution more or less to their taste could hardly face with equanimity the crumbling of one of its columns, and a prospect of further indefinite struggles, each struggle involving a further appeal to arms on the one side and to the populace on the other. So they ceased to be Left Centre and formed a new party called the Feuillants. As the National Assembly had now pretty well finished its task of making the Constitution, and was about to give place to the new "Legislative" provided by that Constitution, the new party lines can best be explained when the Legislative meets.

But, long before that, the Feuillants, or new royalists, had come into armed conflict with the new party that wanted a republic. On 14th July 1791 the anniversary of the fête was celebrated, and on the 17th the following scene was enacted in the Champ de Mars. On the altar lay a petition, that in view of the King's recent flight his powers should be further retrenched. Crowds gathered to listen to speeches on behalf of this petition. The Feuillants saw danger in such meetings; they were too like those they had themselves stimulated at the Palais Royal before 14th July or 5th October 1789. Lafayette appeared on the scene on 17th July, commissioned by the Assembly to disperse the meeting. His proceedings terminated in shooting, with killed and wounded as the consequence.

There followed a persecution of the more democratic revolutionists. Danton, whose bluff and hearty instincts at this time inclined him all in favour of the people and all against the politicians, had, as leader of the Cordeliers, taken up the cause of sectionalism, that is of the right of the districts to be separately consulted, on what concerned all, and the right of the constituents to impose mandates on their representatives. This was in accordance with the spirit of the Revolution, which depended entirely on local initiative to prevent the decrees of the Assembly being a dead letter. Danton, therefore, in this August of the ascendancy of Lafayette, was pursued by an officer with a warrant for his arrest. They had to follow him to his native town, where they

found him giving a dinner. "It would require a troop of cavalry to arrest him," said the government spy. So popular was Danton where he was known. He took refuge in England, however, quite unable for the time to make head against the reaction. Marat, "l'ami du Peuple," had likewise a narrow escape; his printing press was broken up, and he had to vanish for the time, into cellars or whither he could.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CONSTITUTION OF 1791

IN their work of building the Constitution, the National Assembly started with the guidance of "cahiers" of grievances, instructions drawn up in their constituencies. But having in the tennis-court declared themselves permanent, at any rate for the finishing of the Constitution, and shortly afterwards announced that the instructions were not binding, they gave themselves a very free hand.

The Constitution had for prelude the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which has already been discussed in these pages.

The central government was to consist of a single legislative chamber and a King. The Legislative was to be elected by all the active citizens—that is, by all the citizens who paid a certain amount of direct taxes, and were on the rolls of the National Guard. The distribution of members among the departments of France was on the threefold basis of population, square mileage, and amount paid in direct taxes. The method of election was indirect, the primary assemblies of active citizens having to choose electors of a somewhat higher property qualification. The

Legislature could not be dissolved, but elections were to take place every other year.

The King, to mark the passing of Feudalism, was no longer to be called the King of France, but King of the French. Over the acts of the Legislature he had only a suspensive veto, by which he could prevent a Bill from being brought in a second time by the Legislature which first introduced it; if, however, the next two Legislatures passed it, the Bill became law without his consent. He chose the ministers but might not choose them among the members of the Legislative. There was therefore nothing like the English Cabinet system, and the ministers, instead of leading the House, were objects of suspicion as bureaucrats and royal nominees; they only appeared before the House to be interrogated and to make humble recommendations.

In spite of the absence of any link between the King and the Legislature, such as is supplied by the English Cabinet, and in spite of the King's inability to interfere except by the suspensive veto, with the legal omnipotence of the Legislature, he would still have had considerable power in the country had he been really, as he was nominally, the chief of the army and navy. But over one great division of the military force he had no control at all, for the National Guards chose their own subordinate officers by direct election, and their higher officers by indirect election through the subordinate officers. Lest the servile habits of military subordination should, in spite of elective methods, creep into this citizen army,

the officers were only to hold their commands for a year and could not be re-elected until after the interval of another year. There was, however, likewise a standing army of "regulars," in which the King alone conferred the rank of marshal, and the King alone could make an admiral of the fleet. But he only appointed one-half of the lieutenant-generals, one-third of the colonels and lieutenant-colonels; and, in the navy, two-thirds of the vice-admirals, half of the captains, and one-sixth of the lieutenants. The rest of the officers were chosen by a complicated system of preliminary lists and rejections carried on between the army officers and the elected governing bodies of the departments.

The new Constitution for the clergy had the same effect of transferring authority to the people. Under a Concordat with the Pope the French Kings had practically chosen the bishops; now the bishops, like everybody else, were to be elected.

The reason for this elaborate system, by which no individual was to have any great amount of authority was the suspicion of the executive, and especially of the influences that surrounded Louis XVI, which actuated the Constituent Assembly. The same suspicion dictated their arrangement of the civil power. The judges and all municipal and departmental authorities were to be elected by the people We have already observed at the end of Chapter VIII, that these departments and the communes which composed them, were a brand-new set of perfectly systematic divisions for whose introduction

all the old provinces and *généralités* had been completely abolished.

For the sake of formal clearness it has been necessary to look at the new Constitution from the point of view of the King; looked at thus it certainly seems as if every tool of the government is chopped into pieces before it is put into the hands of him who is to use it. But looking thus at this Constitution we are unfair to its makers: the King was not intended to be the wielder of power, and it is unjust to the intelligence of the Constituent to assume that they meant him to be so. The real wielder of power was the middle class, as typified by the ordinary "active" citizen, paying taxes, exercising the franchise, and enrolled in the National Guard. In regarding the Constitution as based upon the King we have been assuming a pyramid to be based on its apex; the Constitution of 1791 was based on the "active" citizens; keeping in mind the questions asked in Chapter II, it can be answered that whatever assistance the people had rendered in critical moments this Constitution was a middle-class business and was based neither on autocracy nor on democracy but on property, as Barnave and those who acted with him intended it should be. On 15th July 1791, nearly a month after the flight to Varennes, when Barnave made his great speech in favour of reconciliation with monarchy, he declared that if the revolution went any further property would be endangered, and therefore he did his best to keep it where it was, and to keep the people also where they were. Approaching the Con-

stitution from the right point of view, that which sees in the active citizen the real sovereign, we can grasp the unity of the system and see what an absolutism it was. As elector the active citizen chose the Legislature, which in its two years of existence could hardly get out of touch with the constituencies. But if this should happen in any case, and a law be not to the taste of the active citizen, it depended entirely on him to put it into force or to leave it a dead letter. No provincial governor armed with irresistible force imposed upon the departments a law from above. Judges, police and municipal officials were all elected for short periods by their fellows, who respected them as much as they chose and were ready to take their places at any time. The active citizen as elector chose the makers of the law; the active citizen as National Guard with his musket was the sole power that enforced whatever laws were made.

That this Constitution in its entirety lasted a very short time everybody knows; that much of it still remains is equally true; what a strain was put upon it in its first year by treason within and aggression from without we have now to examine.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LEGISLATIVE AND THE NEW PARTIES

BY a self-denying ordinance carried in the Constituent by Robespierre, who, of all the revolutionary statesmen, seemed most anxious to be above reproach, the members of that Assembly had debarred themselves from sitting in the Legislative. We have, therefore, new men as well as a new arrangement of parties, though the politicians of the Constituent, the only Frenchmen, be it noted, who had any inside experience of representative government, exercised much influence from without, especially in the Jacobins by means of their eloquence and organisation.

The elections took place soon after the King's attempted flight. The influences abroad in those days were varied. The leaders of the strongest party in the Constituent had decided to back up the monarchy and had for the moment made reaction or at least a halt inevitable ; as these men, Barnave and the rest, had made the Constitution, their influence was great, and they were newly organised into the Feuillant Club.

The Jacobins were the only organisation who had

a complete system of affiliated societies throughout the country, and these had on the whole moved in a republican direction as a result of the King's flight; but Robespierre and the other Jacobins who formed the extreme Left in the Assembly were at that time lying low, if not hedging. They did not feel strong enough to make head against the combination of moderates of all kinds which they saw forming under Bailly, Barnave, and Lafayette; still less was such a man as Robespierre, who angrily trampled on a "cap of liberty" jestingly or tentatively placed on his head at the tribune, inclined to call again on the forces that could be recruited from the starving quarters of Paris; he and his group had no desire to make common cause with the streets against the main body of politicians. So that although the Jacobins on the whole were biding their time very distrustful of monarchy, they did not have their full influence at the elections, and they did not raise a finger in defence of Danton, Marat and others of their extreme wing who at this time were suffering persecution.

It was on this account partly, and partly owing to the spontaneous enthusiasm of the time, and partly because of the ordinance which prevented the re-election of members of the Constituent, that the new Right or Conservative or Feuillant party was opposed in the Legislative not yet mainly by the Jacobins but by an entirely new group of men, the famous Girondists.

This group mostly came from that part of France from which they took their name, the south-western

department whose chief town was Bordeaux. They had from the first a dislike of royalty and were determined to alter the Constitution. Their most prominent leader at first was Brissot, a man of cosmopolitan experience in multifarious and back-stairs journalism. He proved a capable parliamentarian, but was perhaps the only one of the Girondist leaders without personal dignity or distinction of character. The greatest orator of the party, perhaps of the whole Revolution if we except Mirabeau, was Vergniaud, a very high-toned enthusiast, whose lofty thoughts found a marvellous rolling cadence to express them. The party was rich in orators, and three or four could be named almost equal to Vergniaud; here it will be enough to mention Isnard, the most fiery crusader of the revolutionary idea. Apart from oratory the greatest of the Girondists was Condorcet, the last of the great intellectual group that had sprung up in the latter days of Voltaire. He was a man of high distinction in philosophy and science and of stoical heroism in action. In political expedients and theories the Girondists were not rich, but when they arrived at Paris they lived in close communication with Sieyès, who was dissatisfied with a Constitution whose makers had at so many points rejected his advice.

In having all their great orators within the new Assembly the Girondists had a great advantage over their Feuillant opponents, whose leaders, Barnave, Lameth and Duport, having been in the Constituent, were ineligible for the Legislative. The Feuillants had

the advantage of being supported by the court, but it was not an unmixed advantage. Marie Antoinette did not trust her carriage companion and convert Barnave and his friends now that they were doing Mirabeau's work, any more than she had trusted Mirabeau himself. She did not trust these men because they had changed sides for political reasons which she did not understand. Secondly, there was enough suspicion in the country concerning the intentions of the court to make the friendship of the court embarrassing to any politicians. The chief advantage the Feuillants derived from their alliance with the court was the choice by the King of a Feuillant ministry. An important point in which the position of a Conservative party was weakened lay in the disappearance of the bishops and nobles who formed such an important part of the voting strength of the Right in the National Assembly.

CHAPTER XV

THE WAR

SO long as human differences are settled by the clumsy expedient of organised blood-shedding, great new ideas will probably bring after them years of devastation and horror. This is particularly apt to be the case with the ideas to which men owe freedom. The Lutheran Reformation, which led ultimately to the assertion of freedom of thought, was followed by all the wars of Philip and Alva and William of Orange and Elizabeth, and, lastly, to that most horrible thirty years' war that reduced the German peasantry almost to cannibalism and from which Central Europe took generations to recover. So it was to be with the French Revolution.

This was not by any means apparent at first. So late as February 1792 the peace of Europe seemed to William Pitt, speaking in the English Parliament, to be unthreatened from any quarter. For a few weeks in 1790 the situation as between France and England had been overclouded through the action of Spain at Nootka Sound, but the air had soon cleared. Nootka Sound was an English Settlement within territories claimed by Spain upon the Pacific slope of North America. France, by the family compact of the

Bourbon monarchs in 1761, was an ally of Spain. A committee of the Constituent had been appointed to decide upon the validity of treaties; the treaties contracted by monarchs without the consent of the nation were held to require examination by the people's representatives before they could be admitted as binding upon the nation. Spain had put in her claim to support according to treaty, but being very dubious of the new tone of the French government, thought fit to accede to the demands of Pitt. For some time it had seemed possible that France would take up the Spanish cause; but Mirabeau was then at the head of the committee for foreign affairs, and Mirabeau, owing partly to his close intimacy with Hugh Elliott, a skilful diplomatist, had come to the conclusion that English and French interests were not divergent; England, in fact, was thought at this time, in spite of Burke, to be likely to afford moral support to the new constitutional French monarchy.

The country with whom trouble was most to be expected was Austria. There were grievances on either side. By the treaty of Westphalia (1648) France had acquired Alsace, but only on condition of respecting the feudal rights of the numerous princes and nobles of the Empire who held land in the province. Here came the collision between the new ideal and the old obligations. France had, on the 4th August 1789, declared feudalism at an end; the decree was to apply equally to Alsace with the rest of French territory; the feudal grandees of the Germanic Empire thus became enemies of the new France.

On the other hand, France had likewise her grievances. The Elector of Trèves, a great prince of the Empire, had encouraged the emigrant French nobles and courtiers to flock to his dominions, whence, on the very frontiers of France, they conducted intrigues both with friends who remained at Paris, and with every anti-French interest in Europe.

A second grievance of the French was the declaration of Pilnitz, which was an outcome of the appeals of Marie Antoinette to her brother the Emperor Leopold. Leopold was not anxious for war with France, though he was not sorry to see France weakened by her internal divisions. Two outstanding features of European history made him disinclined for any serious affair with France. The first was the long rivalry between Austria and Prussia for the headship of Germany, a rivalry which Frederick the Great had made so serious in the days of Leopold's mother, Marie Theresa, and which ended with the triumphs of Bismarck in the middle of the nineteenth century. The second of the preoccupations of Leopold was the decline of Poland, which also had long been a problem for Austrian statesmen. It was certain that Russia would soon interfere, as in 1772, and seize as much Polish territory as possible, and that Prussia would likewise make the best possible terms for herself. The Emperor feared that if he became involved in hostilities with France he would be left out of the Polish bargain altogether. He was therefore slow to act, especially if his action involved leaving a free hand to his rivals. His double course

in these circumstances was to delay any interference with France, and at the same time to try for some understanding with Prussia, which at the time of his accession was on the verge of attacking him. At the conference of Reichenbach he reached the desired understanding with Frederick William, the successor of Frederick the Great, and by the time of the French King's flight to Varennes in June 1791 it was apparent that the great war in Eastern Europe which the intended Prussian attack on Austria had been expected to bring about, was not going to take place.

By that time, therefore, Leopold, who had responded very little to the earlier letters of Marie Antoinette, began to be more sympathetic. In July he issued a circular to the Kings of Europe calling attention to the sad, imprisoned state of their brother of France. In August he met the King of Prussia at Pilnitz, where it was agreed that the two powers should mobilise to defend the monarchy of France and at the same time the liberties of the French people if the other powers would give their assistance. A declaration was issued to this effect.

These, then, were the chief complaints on either side. The French felt menaced by the *émigrés* at Coblentz and Trèves, and by the declaration of Pilnitz; the princes and nobles of the Empire considered themselves robbed by the abolition of feudalism in Alsace, and the Diet of the Empire had refused to allow them to accept the compensation offered by the French government.

From all this it was by no means certain that war

would follow. The Diet of the Empire was a cumbrous anachronism with little means of enforcing its decrees. The declaration of Pilnitz was not meant seriously by its authors ; the Emperor himself, before going to bed on the day when he had signed it, wrote these words to his Prime Minister, Kaunitz: "The convention we have just signed commits us to nothing whatever; it only contains pointless declarations dragged from us by the importunities of Count d'Artois." When in September Louis XVI accepted the Constitution, Kaunitz wrote: "The King, good man, has helped us out of our difficulty himself."

This meant that Austria did not want war, and therefore France could avoid it. The Emperor even wrote to the Elector of Trèves to the effect that he would not afford him support unless he listened to the overtures of France in the matter of the *émigrés*.

The war was, in fact, brought about by French agencies. In the midst of the reaction of the autumn of 1791, it was felt that the only thing that could upset the monarchist Constitution was foreign war. Brissot afterwards confessed: "They were always quoting the Constitution against us and the Constitution could only be destroyed in a war." And again: "It was the abolition of royalty that I had in view in declaring war." Moreover, there was in the Girondin orators, especially in Isnard, a missionary and crusading spirit which made them take easily to the idea of spreading the gospel of the Rights of Man in foreign parts. The Girondist party therefore pressed for war. For the sake of preserving what

the Girondists wished to overthrow, the Feuillants desired peace.

This view of the case did not appeal to everybody. To Lafayette it seemed that a successful war might restore the King's and advance his own prestige. To the Jacobins, and especially to Robespierre, this opinion seemed pretty correct, and they therefore opposed the war because they desired the Revolution to go further.

Though the ministry was Feuillant, the majority of the Assembly was not with them on the question of peace or war; the strongest group of speakers were the Girondists, and the great moderate or Centre body of members looked for leadership to Lafayette; there was therefore a majority in favour of war. On 9th February 1792 the declaration of Pilnitz was answered by a provocative decree confiscating the property of the *émigrés*. The influence of the Assembly and of Lafayette induced the King to force on his Feuillant ministry the firebrand Narbonne, a brilliant aristocrat, as minister of war. But Narbonne was too high-handed for Louis, and when the minister had published letters to himself from Lafayette and other chiefs of the army with the hope of showing that he had military backing, the King dismissed him.

In the Assembly, however, the attack on the ministry continued, and when in March 1792 Delessart, the foreign minister, was impeached, his colleagues resigned. The King felt he had no alternative to calling in a Girondist ministry. Brissot himself, being a member of the Legislative, could not accept office,

but he had great influence on the appointments. He named, for minister of the interior, Roland, a respectable bureaucrat whose wife had made her drawing-room a social and political centre for the parties of the Left. She was perhaps the greatest personal force in the Girondist party, understood the aims and characters of the rising leaders who frequented her house, and exercised a great though unostentatious influence.

The ablest of the Girondist ministers was the extraordinary man who took the foreign office. Many types of human character were exemplified by the men of the Revolution: pedants, enthusiasts, heroes, at least three statesmanlike intellects, at least one first-rate theorist, and many egoists, and very tragic fools. Dumouriez is the adventurer. Very clever and very resolute, but almost entirely without principle, he had spent a youth and early manhood in the sort of diplomacy that requires an agent who can be quickly disavowed; he had come to be regarded by respectable officials as an inveterate meddler and mar-all, and by others as a genius in search of a job; he had seen a little war in the days of Frederick the Great, his unscrupulous hero, and had spent a short time in the Bastille under Louis XV; now, as Sorel says, he saw in the Revolution "not a regeneration of humanity but a career."

The war-party was now triumphant in the ministry as well as in the Assembly; the influence of the court in causing the war was perhaps greater than that of either. It has already been observed that

Marie Antoinette had not confided in Barnave, though she pretended to accept him as an ally; the proof of this is her own letter to her friends abroad. Both she and Louis annoyed Leopold by telling him that they only accepted the Constitution for politic reasons and hoped to recover their authority by foreign assistance. In December 1791 they wrote to the powers requesting them to make war upon France and to take no notice of what might have to be said officially. Lord Acton attributes Leopold's final decision for war to a letter written by Marie Antoinette on 3rd January 1792. The Emperor henceforth regarded war against France as "the common cause of all crowned heads." His ultimatum was sent on the 25th January, demanding unconditional surrender by France in the matter of Alsace, the restoration to the Pope of his French territory of Avignon, which had been seized by the French government, and the restoration of the King and Queen to freedom and authority. The weakness of the Feuillant ministry in dealing with this ultimatum was a main cause of their fall; the Gironde ministry of March promptly gave the Emperor brief notice to withdraw it, and as Francis, Leopold having died on the 1st of the month, would not disavow the intention of a European alliance against the Revolution, war was declared by France on 20th April. A plan of campaign was drawn up and was promptly betrayed to the Austrians by Marie Antoinette.

The Girondist ministers, and especially Dumouriez and Brissot, attempted in vain to isolate Austria. It

is true that England refrained from war, though Talleyrand could not secure the alliance for which he hoped; but a special embassy could not induce the King of Prussia to desert the Emperor. The King of Sardinia, who hated the Revolution, joined the Austrians and Prussians, and France was thus at war upon her northern, eastern, and south-eastern frontiers at once.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FALL OF THE MONARCHY

THE hostile armies were long in gathering, and it was months before serious fighting took place, but the declaration of war changed the whole political situation in France. The most suggestive explanation would perhaps be to say that the conditions of 1789 were immediately reproduced—the conditions of 1789 before 6th October. The violence which had marked that year was due to the fear that military measures would be employed against the Assembly; two insurrections of Paris had been engineered on purpose to meet this danger. Then, after the royal family had been led captive to the Tuileries, this particular peril ceased; there were no insurrections in 1790 or 1791. When war was declared in April 1792 it was immediately felt that the King had again a military force at his command, though it was a foreign army about to invade his kingdom. From that moment the Tuileries was regarded as an outpost of the enemy; the only thing that could have saved the monarchy from attack would have been a boldly patriotic attitude on the part of Louis, and this was impossible; neither his sluggish character, nor his compromising

relations with Vienna, nor the suspicions of the political chiefs would allow him to play the part of a national and military King. These considerations justify Feuillantist and Girondin leaders who had respectively feared and desired the outbreak of war; they likewise convict of miscalculation the Jacobins and Lafayette. Lafayette overrated himself more even than usual if he thought he could rally the nation around the throne by warlike exploits, and Robespierre was unwontedly timorous if he feared any such development.

In the spring of 1792, then, the country seemed verging on terrible events. Neither King nor ministers made effective preparations to meet the danger from across the frontiers, and therefore the peril from within, the growing menace of a betrayed nation, began to move and stir; so that although up to June the debates of the Assembly scarcely allude to the hazardous deadlock which, in the opening of a great foreign war, made government and people neutralise each other, the painful anxiety must have brooded over speakers and audience, making the party contest seem tedious and empty.

Here one sees a difference between the problem of 1789 and the problem of 1792. In the former year the people trusted the Assembly and were roused by its agitators; in 1792 it was the people who took the initiative.

The dangers amid which the Parisians felt themselves to be living early in 1792 were manifold. The *émigrés* just across the frontier were acting

openly with the enemy; but their emissaries came and went with little pretence at concealment between Paris and Coblentz. When by night the Tuileries were lit up, the belated citizen who saw the brilliance of those windows might well be reminded of another light which he could not see, the ruddy blaze of the camp fires that encircled the north-east.

The clergy who had refused the Constitution were very numerous, and these non-juring priests were everywhere suspected as enemies of the Revolution; rich orders of monks and nuns were known to be supplying the *émigré* war-chest with large sums. In certain provinces, especially in the south-east and in Brittany, leagues of reaction were formed, reactionary organisers went from place to place, arms were stored in country-houses, and civil war had in many places already broken out. One most alarming symptom was the insolence with which royalists in Paris itself began at this time to threaten the populace with retribution, speaking triumphantly of the expected successes of the German troops and the defenceless condition of the kingdom. Then, to the confusion of patriots, a letter was read in the Assembly from Lafayette urging violent measures for the restoration of the King's authority.

The Feuillants were anxious to strengthen the King, the Girondins to diminish his power. But Girondin leaders shrank from appeal to the forces of insurrection. The Gironde, though at heart republican, was essentially of the middle class. Even the Jacobin Robespierre held aloof until June

from the revolutionary plans of the commune; he went so far as to declaim against the evils of republicanism and called attention to the danger to property. Thus the situation was tense with apprehension, for the Assembly was unwilling to face the powers that threatened it; the enemy were dreaded, the King was dreaded, but the assistance of an insurrectionary people was dreaded almost more.

The great city began to exercise pressure upon the Legislative Assembly. It will be remembered that the old pre-revolutionary municipal government of Paris had been overthrown in July 1789. A new elective municipality had then been organised; it was not representative of the people as a whole, it voiced none of the discontents of the classes which had bled and conquered at the Bastille. There was consequently much dissatisfaction outside, a dissatisfaction that found very powerful expression. The municipality and the Assembly on the one side stood for the representative theory of government as well as for the predominance of the middle class; on the other side were what are known as the "districts" and later as the "sections" of Paris, and these held the opposite theory of direct democracy. For the districts were not content with leaving to their committees of electors and to political clubs, the task of surveillance and of protest; each evening a large public meeting was held in each district; here not only were the proceedings of the Legislative criticised, but actual work of an important kind was performed. This work was the acceptance or rejection

of practical measures. Only those interested in reforms can fully realise the extent to which legislative enactments remain a dead letter unless the local governing bodies are willing to put them into force. It is so in England at the present time; it was so in the French Revolution. Where the rural populations took the law into their hands, where the communes asserted themselves, great changes in the tenure of land were effected; where this was not the case little or nothing was done. In Paris itself the districts, organised in public meetings and revolutionary committees, managed their own affairs. In this they were fulfilling the doctrine of Rousseau, that the general will can only be expressed by the people actually assembled, and not by a Parliament. If it were objected that the populace of Paris, not content with administering its own districts, did more than once in the course of the Revolution succeed in coercing the Legislative, and imposing the will of the metropolis upon the representatives of all France, it was answered with some justice that the people of Paris were more truly representative than the Assembly, since Paris was the largest portion anywhere existing in one place, of the classes that were most numerous throughout France.

The Constituent Assembly, and afterwards the Legislative, took steps to resist the pressure of Paris. They abolished the sixty "districts" and replaced them by forty-eight "sections"; they decreed that "active" citizens only should have the municipal franchise; they interdicted what was known as the

permanence of the general assemblies or large public meetings—that is to say, the right of those meetings to be summoned at any time and to discuss any subject; lastly, they made the whole city government subordinate to the larger local division of the department.

If these laws had been capable of enforcement they would have destroyed once for all the possibility of direct democracy and the fear of any coercion exercised on the Assembly by Paris; they would have left a quiet middle-class town council, with no public meetings to disturb it and no power of opposing the will of the departmental authorities. But the whole system of shackles and safeguards fell to the ground. The "sections" became every bit as permanent as the "districts" had been, and their large meetings and revolutionary committees utterly refusing to pay deference to the authorities of the "department," continued to carry on the most important work of the time. On them depended the supply of the necessaries of life, the relief of unemployment, and to some extent the organisation of labour. It has to be admitted that under this régime, with all the disadvantages of improvisation, there was less distress than there had been under the centralised administration of the monarchy.

The hope of the revolutionists throughout France in the spring of 1792 lay in the approaching annual celebration of the 14th July, for which occasion armed bodies of delegates were to be sent from all parts. Thus Paris would be furnished with a patriotic and voluntary guard against the invaders. When the King vetoed a decree for the formation of

a large camp of these *fédérés* in the neighbourhood of Paris—and it will be remembered that his suspensive veto lasted over two Legislatures—it was seen that Louis had power enough under the Constitution to deliver up his defenceless people to his foreign friends.

With 1789 and its insurrections fresh in his memory the King must have realised that he was playing against time, and have wished, like Wellington, for the arrival of the Germans; he continued, however, to play boldly. Another decree of the Legislative which he did not hesitate to veto was one that placed non-juring priests at the mercy of the local authorities and threatened them with expulsion as public enemies.

This defensive use of the veto led him to an aggressive step. He had been obliged to give up his Feuillant ministers in March, and though, considering their aversion to war, he may not have been sorry for the time to do so, he could not be pleased with their Girondin successors. When he was considering the decree against the non-jurors, Madame Roland wrote a letter requesting Louis to give his consent for the sake of the priests themselves; her husband published this letter and the King, deeply offended, made a total change in the ministry; the Girondins went out and the Feuillants came in. This happened on 12th June 1792.

These measures of the King did not meet with any effective opposition in the Legislative Assembly. It was the sections of Paris that took in hand to intimidate the court and procure the royal sanction of the two decrees together with the reinstatement of the

Girondins. June 20th saw a vast deputation to the Tuileries. The official programme included the planting of a tree of liberty to commemorate the third anniversary of the Tennis-Court Oath, and the presentation to the King of a petition on the subject of the decrees. The unofficial programme was more important.

On the appointed morning Paris poured into her streets the rudely armed multitudes who in one way or another were to support the petition. It was quite recognised by the organisers of this deputation that it might be resisted, and on the other hand that if the crowds were admitted into the palace, the lives of the King and Queen were not very safe.

The gate was already being battered by an axe when the King ordered it to be opened. The multitude streamed into the palace and the King stood in the recess of a window as they filed before him. For two hours grotesquely crowned with a red "cap of liberty," he endured savage insults in a spirit of resigned courage, giving no sign of trepidation or even of discomfort. He was frequently struck at, but five soldiers who stood in front of him parried all the blows successfully. The Queen, further on, had placed a large table between the crowd and her children. The prolonged ordeal ended in the triumph of Louis; he quietly refused all concessions to threats or to violence; at length Pétion was brought in to dismiss the tumultuous visitors and the King remained master of the field, uncompromised by anything that had occurred. He did not recall the Girondist ministers, nor did he sanction the decrees.

But though Louis had asserted successfully his constitutional position by refusing to exercise his powers under coercion, countries are not ruled in accordance with their Constitutions when they are in a state of revolution. Therefore the *fédérés* came after all, and the great anniversary of 14th July became an exposition of the King's impotence; it was also remembered as his last public appearance before he appeared on the scaffold.

The men behind the movement of 20th June, Danton or less known persons, for the point is disputed, made repeated efforts to get the Jacobins, and especially Robespierre, to help in organising another and more effective display of popular force. Once or twice they tried to arrange a date. But Robespierre would as yet have nothing to do with them, and the people, for their part, failed to appear formidably in the streets. The royal family still made the Tuileries the centre of *émigré* machinations, the non-juring priests continued their work undisturbed. It was possible that the King would win after all; it was confidently predicted that if only the Tuileries were sufficiently fortified it might be securely held until the approach of a relieving German army. Then two events happened which played into the hands of those obscure men who were bent on saving the Revolution.

The first was the issue by the Prussian commander, the Duke of Brunswick, of his famous manifesto. He announced that Austria and Prussia were interfering in the interests of the Alsatian princes; likewise to put down anarchy, to re-establish legal power, and

to restore to the King the means of exercising his legitimate authority. Any inhabitants of the invaded country who should dare to defend themselves, would be treated with the rigour of war, and their houses burned. Administrators were to answer with their heads and their property for all the crimes they allowed to be committed. All the inhabitants of Paris were to make submission to the King, and if the least outrage, the least violence, were offered to the royal family, the allies would exact an exemplary and ever-memorable vengeance in giving Paris up to military execution and total subversion.

The second event was the arrival of a body of recruits from Marseilles, who were passing through Paris on their way to the frontier, filled with revolutionary enthusiasm. Rouget de l'Isle had just written their hymn, the Marseillaise, in which their patriotism lives to this day. They were easily persuaded that for the sake both of their country and of their families the hostile power of the King, his palace practically an outpost of the enemy, must be conquered before they left for the front.

It was now certain that Paris, roused by Brunswick's manifesto and supported by the recruits from Marseilles and elsewhere, would make a final attack upon the Tuileries. The politicians on the revolutionary side both within and without the Assembly decided to support the movement, which must ruin them if it succeeded without their help or did not succeed. Robespierre and even the Girondins gave their sanction.

The attack was expected by the court, but without despondency. A strong guard of Swiss had been placed in and around the palace. These troops were, as everybody knows, defeated when the great day at length arrived; but if we judge by the result alone, it must be in the face of the highest military opinion. As everybody has read, Napoleon Bonaparte was at this time in Paris, and viewed from a window opposite, the attack on the palace; it was his expressed opinion that if the defenders had been fairly and capably led they would have won. The more confident inhabitants of the place, knowing that Austrian and Prussian armies were at length about to break through the frontiers, and remembering the half-hearted risings of the last few weeks, may well have believed that now at length they were to face the last really terrible storm, with every hope to win through to the haven.

Late on 9th August, the sections of Paris met and appointed the delegates who were to form the Insurrectionary Commune. At 1 a.m. on the 10th, at the Hôtel de Ville, this revolutionary committee dissolved the older commune and put themselves in its place, having first used its authority to summon to their presence the commander of the National Guard of Paris, Mandat, who had placed bodies of troops very skilfully to prevent the insurrectionaries from different parts of the city from uniting. At the Hôtel de Ville, where he arrived soon after 5 a.m., Mandat found himself among the new chiefs of insurrection, Danton, Tallien, Hébert, and the rest of

the delegates. They demanded that he should alter the disposition of the troops according to a scheme of their own; on his refusal he was ordered into arrest, and shot dead as he went down the steps. Danton took responsibility for the act.

It was not until eight o'clock that the attack on the Tuileries commenced. The tocsin had been sounding all night without effect, and the watchers at the palace began to deride it as day broke over the city and the space before them remained empty. But soon after eight o'clock they knew that the tempest was upon them. The assailants advanced in great numbers, and for the most part with pikes, and quickly broke into the courtyard; large bodies of National Guards dispersed; the brunt of the defence was to fall upon the Swiss. As the courtyard filled with pikemen, one regiment of Swiss threw their cartridges out of the windows; this was regarded by the people as a sign of welcome. Disillusion followed swiftly, as from other windows rattled a storm of bullets.

Within the palace the strangest scenes were enacting, and it was being seen that the passive courage which Louis had shown in June was not accompanied by any power of leadership. Marie Antoinette was consumed with shame at the clownish ineptitude of his behaviour to the soldiers it was his business to inspire with ardent valour; "he has been deplorable," she said. Roederer, the military commander, was of opinion that the place could not be defended. The Queen would not believe it, but Louis, after some persuading, gave orders to those

about him to set out for the Hall of the Assembly, which could be reached through a garden. By sheer want of spirit the King was practically abdicating. He seems to have realised in his way what he was doing; as he went he called attention to the fallen leaves, "they are falling early this year"; some newspaper had predicted that the monarchy would not outlast that year's leaves. If anything was required to complete the shame of such a surrender it was the betrayal of the Swiss; after blood had been drawn and the assailants infuriated, the loyal troops, deserted by their King, were left without orders, to do the best they could. At length, after much slaughter of the people, came the order to cease fire, and the last faithful defenders of the French monarchy were hounded to death by an enraged mob. To reflect that Louis thought it worth while to let blood be shed in a cause for which he, who was not a coward, did not think it worth while to hazard his own life, is to read a very instructive chapter in the Book of Kings.

Retribution came swiftly. The royal family took refuge with the Assembly and were accommodated in the reporters' box. There they heard the last of the firing and there they beheld the assailants, who quickly stormed through palace and garden, and came pouring in among the benches of debating legislators. At first the Assembly had promised to stand by the King, but the crowd clamoured for his deposition. Vergniaud proposed that he should be declared suspended, but this mitigation could not conceal the fact that the Capetian monarchy was ended.

CHAPTER XVII

THE INVASION AND THE MASSACRE

WITH the monarchy fell the Feuillant ministry; the sitting in which the King was suspended saw the appointment of an executive consisting chiefly of Girondists, but including Danton, as minister of justice. For this new government matters were slightly simplified by the removal of the King. It is true that the royal family, living now at the Temple, the ancient abode of the Knights Templars, remained a centre of intrigue and of menace; but the King had no longer to be consulted by the ministers; for no act was his authority required and by no delay on his part could anything be hindered.

But very serious difficulties remained. The enemy were now at length advancing on French soil; they crossed the north-eastern frontier on 19th August. On the same day the cause of France and of liberty lost a man whose ability might not have gone very far against even the mediocre generals to whom he was opposed, but whose name was potent enough to make his defection profoundly discouraging. Lafayette, after having strongly espoused the cause

of monarchy, for all sign of hesitation such as he showed in October 1789 and in June 1791 had long since disappeared, had been appointed to a northern command. We have seen that he wrote a letter in support of the war-policy of Narbonne; after war had been declared, he sent letters to the Assembly to the effect that unless the monarchy were greatly strengthened he could not hold his own against the foreign armies. He certainly did not; for the monarchy fell, the armies invaded France, and Lafayette, after vainly attempting to corrupt those under his command, fled over the frontier to find himself quickly in an Austrian prison.

In Paris there was all the making of a very terrible panic. On the day after the capture of the Tuileries the gates of the city had been closed, a large number of arrests had been made, and the prisons had been filled with supposed royalist plotters. These people were too numerous for the prison authorities to be able to cope with them conveniently, and were felt to be almost as dangerous in custody as at large.

Now was seen the weakness of the Constitution of 1791. With a foreign foe crossing the frontier twice as numerous as the defensive army, with large numbers of disaffected citizens in the heart of France, what was required was a government in which the people could confide, a government possessed of authority to control and organise the resources of the country, lacking neither the requisite machinery nor the patriotic will to protect the population to

which it was responsible. The Constitution of 1791 prevented strong centralised control. The bureaucratic system of Old France had fallen into decrepitude before the new system had been introduced; there was therefore no army of recently supplanted officials, who might have been permitted to reassume their functions. The new system, even had it been some time established, required a degree of popular local consent which would have interposed some delay in mobilisation. As it was, with many of the departments wavering in allegiance to the new régime, the task of government was far from enviable and the situation far from reassuring to the Parisians.

Within the supreme executive body there was dissension between Danton and his colleagues. The plan of Roland, who had charge of the Interior, was to fill his office with capable, patriotic, and industrious men, and to issue to the departments a large number of pamphlets on the needs of the situation. Roland himself had all the qualities he demanded in his subordinates, but all his proceedings appeared senile and inadequate in the eyes of Danton.

The Assembly had voted the executive council a considerable sum of money, under the head of "secret expenses," for such uses as those mentioned above, the dissemination of knowledge, and the improvisation of means of rapid action so necessary in the general administrative chaos. Danton kept in close communication with the commune, and was eager to bring his partisans into positions of influence. This would have been impossible if the council as a whole,

consisting mainly of Girondists, were to debate on the use of the money. Danton therefore demanded that each member of the council should have a sum to spend as he thought fit, without consulting his colleagues; he relied on his own unscrupulous energy and the violence of his friends to make a position for himself and his party independent of the council. By his vehemence he overbore Roland, seized the public money, and began to play the part of the strong man so dear to some historians. That he was actuated by a great desire for power his apologists admit; that he was very capable of using power to the advantage of his country can scarcely be denied; it is also certain that he was patriotic. The question is whether the crisis justified his methods. The best justification is perhaps to be found in the pages of Madame Roland herself, the principal denouncer of these proceedings. She tells the following story:—"It had been conceived to be one of the most necessary measures for the council to take, to send into the departments commissioners entrusted with the duty of explaining the events of 10th August; and, above all, of exciting men's minds to prepare for the defence and for the rapid levy of the recruits necessary for the armies on the frontier. As it was a question no less of choosing than of sending these emissaries with fitting instructions, Roland requested to have till the next day for thinking over the subjects to be included. 'I undertake to see to everything,' cried Danton, 'the commune of Paris will supply us with excellent

patriots.' The lazy majority of the council entrusted the selection to him, and the next day he arrived at the board with commissions drawn up; it was only a matter of filling in the names he suggested, and of signing. There was little examination; there was no discussion; they signed. Here was a swarm of little known men, intriguers of the sections or brawlers of the clubs, patriots by exalted sentiment or by private interest, most of them possessing little means of subsistence except what they were getting or hoped to get from popular agitation, but very devoted to their protector Danton, very easily captivated by his licentious doctrine and practice; here they all were, sent to represent the executive council in the departments of France."

The best justification, I repeat, for Danton's violent seizure of supremacy, is to be found in the indifference and incompetence of Roland's friends, admitted here and emphasised elsewhere by Madame Roland herself.

During the month of August the alarm in Paris became more and more serious. Everybody knew from Brunswick's manifesto what was to be expected from the invaders. These fears were in some ways better grounded than was generally known. The *émigrés* were filled with ferocious vengefulness; they had "a list," to quote Mr. Hammond in his book on Fox, "of 34 deputies to be quartered; 103 to be broken on the wheel; 254 to be hanged, and 348 to be sent to the galleys." Perhaps the Assembly would have been more patriotically active had its

members read these lists; as it was, they increased the suspicion of the public by delays, and still more from the fact that many of the deputies were fleeing to the provinces. The flight of these men, the knowledge that Brunswick's manifesto had been gloriously disobeyed and its penalties incurred on the 10th; the news of Lafayette's desertion; the fall of Longwy and the siege of Verdun; horrible stories of Uhlans that cut off men's ears and nailed them to their foreheads; all tended to increase the panic. Then the great black flags marked in white letters with the word "Danger" were hung out from the Hôtel de Ville and from the Cathedral of Notre Dame, and at the same time people began to talk ominously about the royalists in the prisons. "I have a wife and five children whom I want to leave here in the keeping of the section while I go to fight the enemy; but I don't intend that these scoundrels who are in prison for whom the other scoundrels are coming to open the doors, shall be able to go and slaughter my wife and children." So spoke one of the recruits.

Even before the invasion, there had been a demand for a tribunal to investigate the supposed plot in the prisons. The Assembly was very slow to move in the matter; the Insurrectionary Commune became insistent; at length it seemed as if Paris and the Assembly would be face to face in a fresh tumult, the threat of ringing the tocsin had already been uttered, when the Assembly gave way and established a court for the trial of persons suspected of com-

municating with the enemy. But this court established on the 17th got slowly to work, acquitting one man after another, and public confidence was not restored. We have to take all these things into account if we would understand the colossal crime which followed; the advance of the enemy and their barbarities, the threats of Brunswick, the known weakness and suspected treachery of government, and the black sign of peril waving over the streets.

On 2nd September, when the fall of Longwy had been known in Paris for a week, and when intelligence had arrived that Verdun was besieged,—it fell that very day,—twenty-four prisoners, mostly non-juring priests, were being conducted through the streets of Paris in carriages. When they reached the prison to which they were going, their escort set upon them, stabbing at them through the windows and doors of the carriages; only three escaped.

This was the beginning of the four days' massacre in the prisons. In one prison, the Abbaye, Maillard, the leader of the women on 5th October 1789, held a mockery of a trial and 120 people were put to death; in some places there was no pretence at making any discrimination. The people whom the Commune wanted out of the way were killed on the first two days; after that ruffians went on killing for their own satisfaction; for anything so horrible on such a scale one has to go back to the St. Bartholomew.

The actual murderers were a comparatively small band: the more pertinent question is, not why they

so acted, but why they were allowed to follow their nefarious pursuit so long; there is no answer except that a dastardly sense, that by such means a danger was being averted, had come over the dwellers in that gloom-stricken city. For a long while the expedient of massacre had been familiarised to men's imaginations by Marat and others, and these have to bear the blame, if by long preaching of crime they determined, by their suggestions, the sort of dilemma, kill or be killed, that haunted the mind of the crowd in that abnormal time. Danton has also been blamed. The son of Orleans, who afterwards became King of the French, declared that Danton admitted responsibility for the massacres; but Danton's mind was occupied with many things at the time, with the work of rousing France, with strategy and with diplomacy. On the morning of the 2nd, a man whom Roland had appointed to look after the welfare of prisoners, found those unhappy people full of anxiety; their danger was no secret. With the purpose of doing what he could for them, this official repaired to the ministry of the Interior, where a council was just breaking up. Danton was the first of the ministers to come out, and the good man tried to put before him the dreadful situation of the prisoners. Danton broke out in curses, "with his bellowing voice," says Madame Roland; "The prisoners be —— (Je me f . . . bien des prisonniers); let them shift for themselves." The same evening the slaughter commenced. At this time Danton was making those great speeches

that were sending the recruits in their thousands to the front. Madame Roland thinks fifty armed men could have stopped the massacres, so few were the actual assassins; if that was the case, Danton could certainly have commanded the services of at least fifty men, whatever may be said of the breakdown of administration.

The Assembly did nothing to prevent the massacres; the Commune had completely usurped authority for the time being. But it is possible that the massacres would not have happened had the Assembly been trusted by the people. The Legislative consisted of a Feuillant party which had been in the majority since the outbreak of war, for, as we have seen, the Centre party, which had previously prevented the Feuillants from predominating, had only opposed them for their reluctance to declare war; and of a Girondist minority. The Feuillants had come into existence as a royalist party after the flight to Varennes; the Gironde was originally republican in sympathy and aspiration; but their principal orator, Vergniaud, had on 10th August baffled the populace who were crying out for the King's deposition, by proposing that Louis should be suspended. When the massacres were prolonged to the third and fourth day, certain people pressed the Assembly to declare definitely against monarchy. On the 6th September the deputies took an oath committing them against the royal cause; the committees of the sections then took upon themselves to stop the massacres, and were able to do so without difficulty.

CHAPTER XVIII

VALMY

THE foreign war which had precipitated events in Paris in the summer and autumn of 1792 was long in beginning; the Austrians and Prussians did not invade France until 19th August, four months after the declaration of hostilities, but it seemed then as if they would soon be at Paris; this was the opinion of Pitt, and of the French court.

There was little in the way. On the same day Lafayette deserted; on the 24th Longwy surrendered; and on the 2nd September, the day when the massacres commenced at Paris, the allies captured Verdun.

One obstacle remained. France is supplied by Nature with a strong line of defence on that part of the north-eastern frontier which the Prussians and Austrians had decided to penetrate. This is a long range of hills known as the Argonne, closely wooded, and only passable by armies at a few definite spots. The line of the Argonne was now held by Dumouriez; the typical adventurer was to reach the highest point of his career in the very crisis of his country's fortunes; nothing stood between the enemy and Paris but Dumouriez. Behind him was the great Catalaunian Plain, a region famous in the history of

Christendom. There, in a cloudy antiquity, the last great Roman had repulsed the Huns; thither to Rheims had Joan of Arc brought her King to be crowned, and along the very road upon which the allies hoped to march to Paris, had the last of the unbroken line of French Kings only one year ago come lumbering in single carriage, to be recaptured at Varennes.

Between Dumouriez and Paris on 14th September there was nothing; between Dumouriez and Paris on 15th September there was the enemy; Clerfayt, who commanded the Austrians that were with Brunswick, had turned the French left. On the 19th, Dumouriez was reinforced by Kellermann from the south, and the total French force then numbered 53,000, mostly raw recruits, against 34,000 of the Prussians and Austrians, all professional soldiers, and many of them veterans. The 20th was the critical day. Kellermann with the van of the French occupied the hill of Valmy, and the rising mist showed the Austrian and Prussian artillery, which was much stronger than the French, massed against him. The battle consisted in a cannonade in which 300 French were killed and 184 of their enemies. The French recruits stood their ground and the Duke of Brunswick did not follow up his cannonade with a charge. The reason why Brunswick did not carry out the storm of the French position has been sought in the nature of the ground; he himself said it was because he did not know what was behind the hill; Dumouriez with the French rear was behind the hill.

It was a great day for France, for it brought the

invaders to a stand; they could not advance with Dumouriez and Kellermann hanging on their rear. The hero of the day is the French recruit, and after him Dumouriez.

To complete the salvation of France the military work had to be backed by diplomacy, and the hero of the diplomacy was Danton. Danton was a much greater man than Dumouriez, because the basis of his politics was national and not merely personal. Whilst the massacres were going on he, though nominally minister of justice, was the soul of the national defence; he gave himself up to the task of inspiring the people. Organising the system of recruiting and making with his tremendous voice of energy the world echo to his "Boldness, boldness, boldness to the uttermost—and France is saved," he sent the volunteers to the front. At the same time he had in his hands the threads of diplomacy, and on the morrow of Valmy, knowing quite well how little it was safe to risk, he was negotiating for the retreat of the Prussians, and restraining those Frenchmen who were inclined to think they could follow up the success by military means. In his work of diplomacy, Danton was helped by the disease that was rife in the Prussian army, by the muddy condition of the roads, which made the advance more difficult than it would have been in a less rainy season, and by the King of Prussia's discontent with his ally. None the less it was a great achievement, that, before the end of October, the soil of France was cleared of the invaders.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CONVENTION

THE Constitution which had been the result of the unparalleled exertions of the Constituent Assembly, and of the heroism of the peasants and the people of Paris, had come to grief. It had lasted from September 1791 to August 1792. August 10th, 1792, by putting an end to the monarchy, made it necessary to remodel the Constitution, and for this purpose the Legislative Assembly gave place to the third great Assembly of the revolutionary period —the Convention.

The Convention was elected indirectly as were the two former assemblies, but the distinction between active and passive citizens was dropped; all adult men were allowed to vote in the primary assemblies, though women were excluded, in spite of the part they had taken in the Revolution, notably in 5th and 6th October 1789, in spite of the fact that Madame Roland dominated the Girondist ministry by her ability, and lastly, in spite of the band of intellectuals around the great thinker Condorcet, who advocated universal adult suffrage.

The elections took place at the time of the September massacres, and these influenced the results

in some places. The men chosen for Paris were all Cordeliers or extreme Jacobins, the electors having chosen a list drawn up by Marat; but this party did not get a majority taking the country through, and the Girondin ministry was therefore supported by the Convention when it met.

The arrangement of parties was quite a new one. The Gironde now took the place on the extreme Right, or Conservative side, which had been held by the nobles in the National Assembly, and by Barnave and his Feuillants in the Legislative. The Girondins were after all middle-class men like the Feuillants; they had desired the republic, and they had wished the Revolution to go on until a republic was established, but then they wished the Revolution to stop. They were afraid of attacks upon property; they hated the Commune and the idea of direct democracy, of the people acting in the mass regardless of social distinctions. The cry that property must be defended now became the leading theme of a series of pamphlets written by Brissot, their leader. They desired to stop the Revolution even at the risk of reintroducing monarchy, and to crush the Commune with its supporters, Danton, Robespierre, and Marat.

The centre of the hall was occupied by a great body of deputies known as the "Plain" or the "Marsh." These were men without strong convictions: they were mostly decided one way or the other by the exigencies of the moment, and generally followed whichever party gave a bold lead. At first most of them supported the Gironde.

To the extreme Left was the party of Robespierre, Danton, and Marat. They were called the "Mountain," because they sat high up in the room, which was an amphitheatre; they wanted the Revolution to go further. Robespierre, though he had been capable of temporising at every step, as when he declaimed against a republic before August 1792, and for some time talked about the sacredness of property, had at every step decided at almost the last moment to take that step in company with the most advanced men. Danton was one of the new ministry chosen by the Legislative Assembly on 10th August. At the time of the massacres he had become the foremost man in France. He cannot entirely escape responsibility for the violent actions of that time, both for reasons already noticed, and because as minister of justice he had sent to the departments an order that the example of Paris should be followed. His colleagues in the new ministry were, as we have seen, Girondins, with whom he was not in sympathy, although they did not definitely accept their new Conservative rôle until after August. At the time of the massacres the Girondin ministers, and especially Roland, had wished to flee from Paris and to invite the Assembly to follow them. This would not only have been to remove the Assembly from the influence of the Parisian populace, which had hitherto been decisive at the critical moments; it would have meant the betrayal of Paris to the enemy, and probably a massacre of the Parisians. Danton did not wish the Revolution to end with the accession of the

Girondists to power; it was clear to him that it could not end there without a certainty of reaction, since the Girondists, if they retained their position without further appeals to the people as a whole, would have to make terms with the Germans and the *émigrés*. Moreover, he saw that Paris was the brain, the nerve-centre of France, and that to sacrifice it would not only be a crime but a most terrible mistake if the republic was to be defended. His old sectionalist instincts must have reinforced this feeling; the believers in direct democracy, with whom he had acted at the Cordeliers, considered representation by deputies with such distrust, that they held Paris, which was, after all, the largest mass of the people collected in one place, to voice the real needs of France as a whole more truly than any number of departmental representatives chosen through political machinery. At any rate Danton, by the force of his personality, and by the veiled threat to Roland—"If you talk too loudly of flight the people may hear you"—put an abrupt end to that proposal. In this he rendered as great a service to his country as by his cool-headed and strong-handed diplomacy after Valmy.

Marat, after suffering persecution in two reactions, now for the first time showed his bleared face in the front of respectable politics. He loved the people and gave himself for them if ever a man did, but his unfortunate advocacy of massacre—as if he had only learned the one lesson that the blood of the rich is no more sacred than that of the poor—

has made him one of that unhappy band for whom one cannot say a good word without being accused of using whitewash. Apart from this mistake he had keen sociological insight, but he was not the man to control a crisis as Danton could.

The month of November was a month of glory for France. Dumouriez won the battle of Jemappes and overran the Austrian Netherlands, where he was greatly assisted by the party which had recently been in revolt against the Emperor. On 19th November the Convention passed a famous decree, in full accord with the original crusading spirit of the Girondists, promising aid to all peoples that were struggling to be free.

During this happy month, party struggles relaxed their murderous tension. Danton, though he had resigned from the ministry, set himself to unite the Gironde with the Mountain, in the hope of presenting a united front to the foreign enemy. In this, however, he was unsuccessful, and the opportunity for the Gironde to make their peace with the spirit of the age never came again. Brissot poured thick and fast his pamphlets and speeches in favour of making a stand against further advances in a democratic direction.

CHAPTER XX

THE END OF LOUIS XVI

THE great question after 10th August was what to do with the King. The Mountain felt that by putting him to death, the French people would violently and for ever break with the monarchical tradition. To break violently with the monarchical tradition was no longer the chief preoccupation of the Gironde; in their new rôle as a liberty and property defence league, they might need to keep open a back-door of reconciliation with the royalists against the Revolution; above all, if they went in for the policy of executing Louis, they would be tamely following, before all France, the policy of their opponents, the Mountain, and would lose their prestige as the leading group. They did all they could, by indirect means, to prevent or delay the trial, without putting themselves into that open opposition to it, which, as public opinion then was, would have brought about their fall. France was by this time full of popular societies which in general demanded that the King should be brought to trial, and the Paris Commune supported the demand.

Assuming that the Convention was right in its

claim that as *de facto* sovereign of France it had the right to try Louis, since such a trial would be trial by his peers, it is clear that Louis' correspondence with the Emperor, having done more than anything by direct invitation to bring the Austrians upon France, was treason of the most wholesale kind. But this correspondence was not known to those who tried the King; they would have had to judge by his conduct before 10th August that he was in league with the enemy, had not the locksmith who had helped him to fit up a secret cupboard in the Tuileries betrayed his trust. The Convention thus learned that Louis had been continually corrupting members of the Legislative and others—Mirabeau's venality came to light in this way—but also that the King had in his pay certain *émigrés* who had marched with Brunswick in his invasion.

Louis was voted guilty by an overwhelming majority. The death penalty was voted by a majority of one, but there was a considerable majority against delaying the execution. On the day of the King's execution Napoleon Bonaparte again came into Louis' life, this time not merely as a spectator from a window as on the date when the Tuileries was carried by storm, but as a fatally decisive agent. He was in command of the troops which prevented a well-planned rescue from being carried into effect as the King was on his way to the guillotine on 21st January 1791.

The death of Louis undoubtedly weakened the Gironde, whose reluctance had been obvious. They

had neither dared to carry out their own policy boldly nor succeeded in dissociating themselves from the fallen and hated cause.

The execution afforded occasion for the breach between England and Revolutionary France, but if the negotiations are followed it can hardly be regarded as either the sole cause or sufficient in itself to have brought about the result. English opinion had been inflamed against the French Revolution by Burke; the King and the court wanted war, and there was a strong war party headed by Grenville in the Cabinet. But Pitt was against war and was trying to avoid it, supported by the patriotic Opposition under Fox who had some influence with French statesmen.

Before the death of Louis the questions at issue between England and France were two. The decree of 19th November had been regarded as more especially a blow at England since Ireland was at the time smouldering in discontent which was soon to become revolt. Secondly, in conquering Belgium, Dumouriez had declared the Scheldt open to commerce, and the English were under treaty obligations to the Dutch to prevent the Scheldt being opened. These questions might not in themselves have produced war. A proposal to put a harmless meaning upon the decree of 19th November was under consideration, and the opening of the Scheldt had not brought with it any demand from the Dutch that England should fulfil her obligations to them; on the contrary the Dutch were negotiating hopefully with

Dumouriez. Pitt might even have been able to hold in check the violent members of his party and of the Cabinet. But there was a violent war party in France, headed by Brissot and the Girondins, and the French ambassador Chauvelin was a tactless man, himself desiring war, and personally detested by Pitt. Even as it was, war was nearly avoided, and Maret, a skilful diplomatist, who desired peace and who had the confidence of Pitt, was on his way to supersede Chauvelin, when that firebrand, who had provoked the English Premier to order his expulsion, arrived in Paris and set French feeling in a flame. The war was the result. Whether in the absence of this spark of diplomatic misunderstanding the dangerous conjunction of combustibles would have escaped all other sparks it is impossible to say. A proof that the execution of the King would not alone have caused the war is to be found in the English demand that France should restore her conquests; compliance with this demand, it was said, would ensure peace, and no mention was made of Louis, whom Spain was then urging England to join in strenuous efforts to save.

War was also declared with Holland, Spain and Naples, the Spanish and Neapolitan Bourbons having hitherto held back for fear of hastening Louis' death.

CHAPTER XXI

THE FALL OF THE GIRONDE

THE pressing needs of France at the beginning of the year 1793 were some alleviation of economic distress and some organ of central government. Distress had increased fearfully from the commencement of war. In Paris the Commune had succeeded in keeping the price of bread fairly low, solely by a grant from the national exchequer, but in many places it was being sold at starvation prices.

Nothing is more remarkable in the Revolution than the way in which the same problems recur in slightly altered forms. As in the year 1789, the misery of the starving was mocked by the enormous wealth of the few. These few were now the speculators who had made money out of the Revolution, out of the sale of the Church lands and the flotation of loans that were secured upon those lands, or out of the fluctuations in the supply of the necessaries of life. Stockjobbing assumed terrible proportions and accentuated the effects of scarcity. One of the demands of the people was therefore that these successors of the privileged orders of the old régime should pay taxes in proportion to their wealth. Side

by side with this was the requirement that a maximum price of bread should be fixed. The Girondists as middle-class economists opposed all these things, partly owing to their *laissez-faire* theories, and partly because they had definitely ranged themselves against any attempt to reduce inequality of wealth. Rural France was further agitated by the question of the abolition of feudalism, which had been practically shelved by the Constituent in stipulating for compensation.

The need for a strong government was forced home not only by the distress of the people, but by military disasters. It was not merely that the fortunes of war were turning against France, but several provinces rebelled against the Republic.

The rapid successes of Dumouriez in November 1792 had astonished the French themselves. Jemappes was won on 6th November, Mons fell on the 7th, and Brussels was occupied on the 14th. Joseph II, the Emperor before Leopold, had caused a rebellion in the Austrian Netherlands by attempting to introduce a new system of government, and, above all, by interfering with the ecclesiastical control of education. Leopold had quieted the province by practically surrendering the chief points at issue, but confidence in the Austrian house was not yet restored. Camille Desmoulins' newspaper, *The Revolutions of France and Brabant*, had indicated by its title the sympathy that existed between the two movements, although the French were attacking ancient institutions and the Belgian rebels were demanding their restoration.

The insurrectionary nature of the events in the two countries was the bond which united them, and it was soon snapped when the real nature of the French movement was intimately felt by the Belgians. On 15th December the Convention decreed that the new French institutions should be established in every place occupied by the armies of France; the Belgians had no wish for anything of the kind, being specially attached to the Roman Catholic religion; they were not conciliated by the annexation of their country to France in the spring of 1793. To crown all, Dumouriez committed the folly of invading Holland, with which power war had been declared on 1st February.

The first of the French reverses was their failure before Maestricht, which had received Prussian reinforcements just in time for a successful defence. This was followed by the defeat of Dumouriez at Neerwinden on 18th March by the new Austrian commander Coburg. After two more French defeats at Louvain and Ath, Dumouriez was driven back over the frontier to Valenciennes, but he had already begun to treat with the enemy. He proposed to hand over to them the French frontier fortresses and to join them in a march on Paris to restore the monarchy. He was suspected by the Convention; his army proved unmanageable; and having delivered up to the Austrians four commissioners who were sent from Paris to watch him, he deserted to the Prince of Coburg with a few thousand men. Thus by the commencement of April the terrors of invasion again hovered upon the northern frontier.

Meanwhile civil war was already raging in France. The country to the south of the lower Loire, the department of La Vendée, was inhabited by a strongly Catholic peasantry which at first had been little affected by the Revolution. Feudal oppression was not acute in a country where the landlords were mainly of what in England we should call the gentleman-farmer type. The Civil Constitution of the clergy put this population in opposition to the Revolution; hundreds of unconstitutional priests remained in the district.

The rising was precipitated by the law of conscription of March 1793. The peasants refused to leave their homes to fight for a government which they disliked. They were very ignorant, and by means of miracles and exhortations the priests worked them up to a high degree of fanatical fury; the constitutional priests and other supporters of the government who fell into their hands in the course of an organised hunt were killed with fiendish tortures.

Having thus thrown away the scabbard, the peasants placed themselves under the leadership of the local gentry; these responded to the appeal, and helped to give the movement its later character of royalism. The rebellion commenced almost simultaneously with the retreat and treachery of Dumouriez, and succeeded so well that before the end of March 1793 a large area containing many country towns had been covered by it and the rebels were approaching Nantes.

All this time trouble was brewing in the south,

where by the end of May the royalists had gained control of the city of Lyons and massacred 800 republicans.

To meet all these dangers from foreign invasion, domestic treason and local insurrection, the Convention felt the need of some far stronger centralisation of the executive than had been provided by the Constitution of 1791. The following measures were taken to bring France under the control of the Convention.

Soon after the death of Louis XVI the system of deputies on mission was organised; these were members of the Convention sent into the departments with almost absolute power for the purpose of hurrying the conscription, of taking what measures they could to place the different localities in the hands of republicans in touch with Paris, often through the agency of the affiliated societies of Jacobins, and of reporting on the state of the country.

Secondly, new central powers were constituted. The principal advocates of what came to be known as the dictatorship were Danton and Robespierre. The first step was taken on 29th March 1793 by the appointment of the Revolutionary Tribunal to try, without appeal, cases of treason against the State. Danton declared during the debate that if such a tribunal had existed in the previous September there would have been no massacre. Robespierre wanted the court to be competent to try members of the Convention and to have no jury, but on both these points he was overruled by the Girondins, who could still command the undecided voters of the Plain.

The next step was the appointment of the dictator itself. This was the immediate result of the treason of Dumouriez, when the whole national defence was crumbling in upon the northern provinces. Isnard the Girondin was the first to propose this dictator, in the form of a Committee, but Danton quickly supported the motion. Therefore on the 5th of April the first Committee of Public Safety was appointed. It consisted mostly of Jacobins and Danton was the predominant member. Thus did the demon of a Parliamentary executive which had been rejected by the Constituent, come back into the Convention with sevenfold strength. The Committee was what Danton called it, a Dictator; it deliberated in secret, made use of the Revolutionary Tribunal to destroy all that opposed it, and had for its especial work to control the ministers of State and to secure the Public Safety.

The composition of the Committee of 5th April showed that power was passing away from the Gironde. That famous party was now in the position that had been occupied by the royalists; it was opposing the further progress of the Revolution; it was declining to take the lead even in a vigorous policy of defence against famine and the foreign invader. Soon a conflict developed between the Girondists in the government and the Convention on the one hand, and the Commune, with more or less support from the Mountain, on the other.

The Convention struck several vain blows at the Commune, besides refusing to decree a maximum

price for the necessaries of life. Marat was arrested and sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal, but his acquittal was made an ovation; the populace led him back to the Convention shoulder high and covered with flowers. On 19th May the Girondins got a Commission of Twelve appointed to inquire into the decisions of the Commune. Some of the leaders of the Commune were arrested by this committee.

On the other hand there was rioting in Paris; the sections were mobilising against the Gironde as they had mobilised against the monarchists. A list of twenty-two leading Girondists was drawn up and crowds of petitioners came to the Convention to demand their expulsion. Isnard, referring to the danger which was felt to be overhanging the Girondist deputies, declared that the provinces, if anything happened to their representatives in Paris, would take a dire revenge. In words that now suggest American humour, but which must then have seemed an echo of Brunswick and the *émigrés*, he declared that people would be searching along the banks of the Seine to discover where Paris had stood. The remark was all the more unfortunate because one leading charge against the Girondists was that they were federalists. It would have been no discredit to them had they been federalists, but nobody can fail to see that the doctrine of the Commune, with its direct democracy, involved a much closer approach to federalism; the most that could be said of the Girondins was that they favoured a certain amount of decentralisation: the reason for the accusation was their inclination to

appeal to other parts of France against the Parisians; the demand that the Convention should have a guard drawn from the departments did not improve matters.

The weakness of the Gironde was that they were too theoretic for the emergency; they did not feel the nation behind them as an overwhelming torrent which they could lead against the foe, but rather as a dangerous mob that must be kept back at all costs; they did not see that something must be done in the crisis to feed the people, however much in the long run free-trade might increase the fortunes of the merchants. The Commune on its own authority imposed a progressive income-tax for the purposes of the war, exempting all incomes below fifteen hundred livres for the head of each family and a thousand livres for each other member, but when a large forced loan was proposed in the Convention, to be secured on the enormous estates which the nation had acquired by confiscation, the Gironde opposed it with fury.

The Commune was still full of the vigour of direct democracy; the great meetings of the sections were held in the evenings; general policy was not decided by the council of the Commune without the assent of the people, who had recently formed a new "general committee" to conduct proceedings against the Convention. Every effort was made to procure a bloodless revolution; it was felt that September must not be repeated, that the Revolutionary Tribunal controlled by the Committee of Public Safety existed for the very purpose of saving France from all fear

of recurrence to any form of lynching. Moreover, the leaders of the Mountain, and especially Danton, felt strong sympathy with those who, though now opposed to them, had fought by their side in the great struggle against monarchy. It was therefore decided to make a display of overwhelming force in the hope that the Girondists would bow to necessity without provoking violence.

The council of the Commune, the new Insurrectionary Council, and the leading members of the Mountain arranged a general rising of Paris. The day chosen was the 29th May. The necessity for some decisive action was emphasised by the news that reached Paris. Valenciennes and Maubeuge were the last two fortresses which resisted the enemy on the northern frontier. The commencement of the siege of Valenciennes therefore caused acute alarm. It was on the very morning of the 29th that the massacre of republicans by royalists took place in Lyons.

The revolutionary party appointed a man named Hanriet, who had been a wandering player, to command those battalions of the National Guards on whom they could rely; the other battalions were drawn up outside the palace in the interests of the government; Hanriot, a clever and resolute man whom the old régime would have wasted, surrounded the Tuileries with cannon. But the rising of the 29th was a failure; the Convention was not daunted, and Vergniaud, who had amid such scenes a genius for courageously leading his party to immediate

triumph and ultimate disaster—it was he who, by proposing the suspension instead of the deposition of the King, baffled the crowd which had stormed the Tuileries—now proposed that the sections had deserved well of their country. The crowds dispersed, but the conciliatory rhetoric had not cut the political knot; France was still in danger, and a government out of sympathy with the people held office. The only real concession was the extinction of the Committee of Twelve which had been appointed to prosecute the leaders of the Commune.

On the 2nd June another attempt was made, and with better success. More than a hundred thousand armed men surrounded the Convention. They were determined to make a good job this time; moreover, they had just heard of the massacre at Lyons. The Convention were asked to expel the Girondin chiefs; they declared that they were not a free assembly, and a large body of deputies left the hall. But Hanriot was equal to the situation. With a cry of "Gunners to your guns"—and this time there were a hundred and sixty-three—he showed the members that the people would not again be bluffed. The Convention then gave way. The leading Girondists were expelled from the Assembly and placed under arrest in their own houses. They were, however, practically free, and most of them departed for the provinces to stir up revolt against the new government. By this time the only real government in France, whoever might hold office, was the Committee of Public Safety.

CHAPTER XXII

REVOLUTIONARY ABSOLUTISM

IN one of the most magnificent of the Scandinavian Sagas, the outlaw hero at the culmination of his strength meets in horrid nocturnal death-struggle a grisly and unearthly combatant, whom he vanquishes, but from whose lips upturned in the winter moonlight he receives the curse which makes of all his future course a foredoomed struggle with disaster. The Revolution had won over the Gironde a victory necessary and fatal. This victory was the last great effort of the true Revolution. We have seen that the Revolution was a power of the French nation that gripped the statesmen and the parties, the Kings and the generals, and set them to its work. The bankruptcy and the riotings forced Louis and Necker to call the States-General, and picking up the National Assembly drove it against the monarchy till the foundations of the monarchy were undermined. One by one the agents of the Revolution turned against it and were swept away. The King, the Feuillants, the Gironde, performed in turn the purposes of the giant Revolution, but they were not identified with what was profoundest in the Revolution. Those who stood

for constitutional monarchy or middle-class republic stood at the margin of a rising flood. The spirit of revolution struggled for a time to express and embody itself in them, but finding them too contracted and uncongenial it rent them. It was trying to shape itself but it had hitherto remained incoherent, a force of revolt, of unwieldy power, of unofficial, unrecognised, uncovenanted violence; it was trying to become a power among powers, a state with a government suitable to freedom and with unanimity capable of war. The Gironde is the last government that attempts to control and baffle the essential purpose of the Revolution, and the Revolution on 29th May and 2nd June 1793 has issued from its deeps and swept them from the Convention. We have seen the same thing done by the giant before, but we shall not see it done again.

The Revolution gained much by this last effort, but at the same time it began to go downhill. First for the gain. Whilst the King was on the throne, whilst the middle-class governments were in power, the authorities could not be trusted either to make head against the foreign enemy or to establish freedom at home. The Revolution therefore hampered all attempts to establish a strong government. It made use of Barnave and his party to ensure a weak executive in the Constitution of 1791; it made use of the Girondists to hamper and finally to overthrow the Feuillants when they tried at length to restore what they had broken; lastly, when the Gironde followed the same path and, having broadened the Constitu-

tion to include its own middle class, was trying to strengthen government, the Revolution hurled against this government Paris and the Mountain and in one last effort crushed it.

The Mountain came now into power, and there was no party left to follow it up and chase it out in its turn. Moreover, the Mountain expressed more fully what there was left of the Revolution to be expressed. The result was that France had at length a strong government. Hitherto the Revolution had been perpetually occupied in keeping the governments weak because it distrusted them. Now at length the Revolution lent all its force to the Committee of Public Safety for a season and the government became pitiless, invincible, and absolute. The result was one of the noblest military triumphs in history. A nation struggling for freedom defeated a continent.

But in the struggle the nation was after all baulked of the very freedom for which it was fighting. The Revolution, growing weary of perpetual struggle and suspicion, entrusted its soul to Danton, Robespierre and Marat, and the soul was lost, not, it must be owned, by the fault of those men.

Every great attempt of the human race seems to entail an expenditure of force that makes it fail after a time, though some fruit is ultimately gained. The Romans established an empire that did wondrous things for humanity, but they came to grief because in this grand enterprise they came upon unforeseen problems of economics and politics which they had

not the opportunity to solve. Similarly the French nation advanced bravely into their Revolution, but the weight of the unforeseen problems became heavier with every month. The rest of this book will be taken up with showing how at last the hounds pulled the noble stag to earth.

CHAPTER XXIII

FOREIGN WAR IN 1793

WHEN the Gironde fell, the war on the northern frontier was rolling back upon France. Valenciennes and Maubeuge checked the advance of the enemy, *i.e.* of the Austrians, English, and Dutch under the Duke of York and the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, who had just driven Dumouriez out of the Netherlands. In spite of the energy of the Committee of Public Safety, the northern defences of France could not for some time be rendered secure. It is to be remembered that war was going on at the same time on the Rhine, in the south, and in Brittany and the Vendée. August was a month of utter peril, for Mainz and Valenciennes had fallen, Custine retired on Alsace, the English Admiral Hood occupied Toulon, and the Vendeans were defeating the republican generals. The state of suspicion and disorganisation that prevailed on the French side may be guessed from the fact that in August all officers of noble birth were cashiered. We have to recollect that the nobles had been the military caste, and that the Committee of Public Safety was still sorting and sifting and trying to discover new officers of genius who were to save the country.

All eyes were directed on Maubeuge. The French commander there received a message from the Committee, now ruling by terror, that his head stood or fell with his fortress. But in justice it must be said that they were making inhuman efforts to relieve him. The military expert on the Committee of Public Safety was Carnot, the most intense and pitiless organiser before the rise of Napoleon.

But before the siege of Maubeuge there was a diversion. The English had entered the war for their own reasons. At a Conference of the allies, in which it had been proposed to disdain selfish intentions and to make no annexations, the English representative had declared bluntly that England was in the business for Dunkirk and the French colonies and would seize them whenever it might be possible. In this we had the advantage of our allies, who were hypocrites. The Duke of York set himself to attack Dunkirk whilst Coburg perpared to attack Maubeuge. The consequence was the defeat of his Royal Highness on 8th September at Hondschoote by the French general Houchard, who was guillotined for not following up the victory.

The investment of Maubeuge took place three days later. The decisive day was the 15th October. Carnot, after trying his officers by breaking the army into small commands, had at length pitched upon Jourdan as a man fit for responsibility and gave him the supreme control of all the northern frontier. But on the decisive day Carnot was by Jourdan's side, overruled his opinion, and led in person the final

charge against the Austrian guns. Thus was the great battle of Wattignies gained and thus was Maubeuge relieved, the Austrians retreating across the Sambre. They were destined not to return until twenty years had passed.

On the Rhine frontier likewise the tide turned before the year was out. After the capture of Mainz, the Austrians under Wurmser penetrated the lines of Weissenbourg and broke into Alsace but wasted much time in the face of incompetent French generals. This waste of time was decisive. After the relief of Maubeuge, Carnot directed the stream of recruits towards the Rhine and sent St. Just and another deputy to the front with full powers to do whatever might be necessary. They deposed the commander immediately, and in his place put Pichegru, a complete novice, but one of the geniuses whom the Revolution discovered. The whole system of the army was thoroughly remodelled, plundering stopped, requisitions organised, officers punished, removed, or promoted, and another genius, Hoche, only twenty-five years old, found to co-operate with Pichegru. By November these two generals were driving the Prussians and Austrians before them, though at Kaiserslautern, where there was fighting for three days, Hoche suffered a check at the end of the month. In spite of quarrelling between the two brilliant French generals, the enemy under Brunswick and Wurmser were driven across the Rhine, and Landau, which had stood a four months' siege, was relieved before the end of the year. Early in January the French

overran the Palatinate. The soil of France was thus almost freed, for young Bonaparte had performed before Christmas that artillery feat which forced the English to evacuate Toulon, though the Austrians still held a narrow tract on the frontier of the Netherlands. France for a long time to come was destined to take the offensive in warfare.

CHAPTER XXIV

CIVIL WAR IN 1793

AT the beginning of June when the Girondist ministry fell, the Vendean rising was assuming the proportions of a war of secession. The greatest danger on the Belgian frontier thus coincided with the crisis in Paris and the great rebellion of the west. The smugglers and fishermen of the Atlantic shore, where marshes penetrable only by the natives defied pursuit, were in rebellion under Charette, an ex-lieutenant of the navy, whilst higher up the banks of the Loire, the no less impenetrable woodland, the *bocage*, of uneven deep-thicketed hills had become a country in which no man could be a republican and live. The expansion of the revolt paused at Saumur, where the rebels gained a victory on 10th June. The war, in addition to its fanatical savagery, had a character of unearthly strangeness. The rebel armies when closest pressed could vanish by paths known only to themselves, and at any moment the republican outposts might find the wood alive with strange faces and bullets. The peasant forces disbanded themselves for Easter and recovered the offensive in a few days. After taking Saumur, however, there was a

necessity for deciding on the best way of making themselves effective outside their own region. It has been thought that a march on Paris would have had at least the success of releasing the Queen and her children. It was decided, however, to march north and consolidate the royalist power in Brittany and Normandy. After taking Saumur, therefore, the grand army, as it was called, crossed the Loire and marched westward along the right bank to Nantes. At first the rebellion, directed against ecclesiastical changes and the conscription, had been headed in the *bocage* by the hawker Cathelineau and the gamekeeper Stofflet; as it became royalist, and the cry was "Church and King," the peasants placed themselves under their local nobility, and the names of Lescure, Larochejaquelin, Bonchamp, and d'Elbée soon became famous.

Nantes held for the Republic under its stout Mayor Baco, and the grand army, attempting a storm of the defences, lost Cathelineau and was baffled. This was on 29th June, and the Vendeans retired. At Paris the magnitude of the peril was realised, and throughout July the rebels were kept on the defensive, although no foothold in their strange country could be obtained by the growing armies of the Republic. The only serious battle was at Chatillon, where the Vendeans defeated Westermann. The terrible August, with Valenciennes just fallen, Toulon occupied by the English, and the Austrians about to concentrate on Maubeuge, gave the Republic no rest from the deadly necessity of keeping one hand on the throat of the

Loire country. At length in September, just before the tide began to turn at Wattignies, there was a respite in the west. Between Charette in the fens by the ocean and his allies in the woods there stood Luçon for the Republic. An attack on this place from both sides failed. After this, although the rebels won several victories, they never again threatened the Republic as they had threatened it when they nearly cut off Nantes. Steadily and ferociously the government generals burnt and ravaged the woods. Gradually the irregular nature of the Vendean army told in lack of concert and in quarrels about plunder. Then came the sulky retirement of Charette, and on 16th October at Cholet, a very damaging defeat in which Bonchamp and d'Elbée were lost.

Then a desperate plan was adopted. Larochejaquelein, a young hero of twenty-one, led an advance northward across the Loire and attempted to seize a small seaport where they had been led to expect the landing of help from England. They failed, and the retreat began. Victories were still gained, but the army of peasants, accompanied by their women and children, were marching south to their own country from no military plan but simply from desperate homesickness. The crushing defeat and massacre came at Le Mans so late as 13th December. On the 23rd the work was finished by Kléber at Savernay, and the Republic had no more to fear in the west.

The principal revolts in the south were at Lyons and Bourdeaux. In each of these places there was a strong Girondist element, and at Lyons especially

the royalists took advantage of the discontent of the Girondist middle classes, who were becoming more afraid of the Convention than of royalism. There was fighting in the streets of Lyons on the 29th May, with the result that the city was dominated by Girondists and royalists. Other towns joined the movement, which seemed likely to carry away the whole of the south whilst the Vendée was at its height in the west.

The Girondins, after their expulsion from the Convention, were placed under very ineffective arrest in their own houses, and many of them left Paris to spread revolt through the provinces. One of them, Rebecqui, came to Marseilles and instigated the levy of a force to support Lyons, but this force fell in with an army of the Republic and was broken up, and soon Marseilles was occupied by the republicans. The Girondists and royalists who could escape took refuge in Toulon; it was in August that they delivered Toulon into the hands of the Spaniards and the English under Admiral Hood. The Bourdeaux rising was feeble; it was little more than a plausible pretext for the savagery with which Tallien, the deputy on mission, carried out reprisals. Lyons made the most obstinate resistance and put itself under Précy, a zealous royalist. The siege was commenced in August and ended in October, when Précy cut his way out and reached Switzerland with but few of those who started with him.

The Republic's revenge, entrusted to Fouché, one of the worst men of the age, was atrocious, and the complete destruction of the city only failed from the

impossibility of carrying it out. Thus, one by one, the cities of the south submitted to the triumphant Republic, and the critical year 1793 did not close until the military danger within as well as without had come to an end. There were dangers to the Republic more subtle and more deadly than either insurrection or foreign war.

CHAPTER XXV

THE FIRST COMMITTEE AND DANTON

THE Gironde having fallen at the beginning of June, the government was now clearly in the hands of the Dantonist Committee of Public Safety. There was a larger but subordinate Committee of General Security whose principal business was to organise the arrests; there was likewise the Commune, still powerful in Paris through its popular basis, its recent insurrectionary initiative, and its activity in organising the food-supply of the metropolis. But the control of the armies, of the provinces, of diplomacy, and ultimately of life and death, was in the hands of the Committee of Public Safety. The first Committee of Public Safety consisted of nine men of whom Danton was the greatest in influence and ability. The Committee was appointed largely on his initiative, and although the date of its appointment, 5th April, was nearly two months before the fall of the Gironde, the Dantonist complexion of the Committee reflected already the coming change.

The early summer of 1793 was the central period of Danton's greatness. He had had a few weeks of glorious activity saving his country in September

1792, and after that he had failed in his cherished plan of the winter, the union of the Gironde and of the Mountain into a patriotic republican party. He blazes forth again in April, May, and June 1793. His policy is always one of union and reconciliation among the republicans at home; abroad, vigorous war, combined with sagacious, cool, moderate, and unprejudiced diplomacy. In these aims he was embarrassed, as Mirabeau had been embarrassed, by the necessity of continuing to play his part of demagogue, but he met with considerable success. Understanding the statesmen of Europe through the simple fact that he was one of them, he was quite untrammelled by the logical consequences of that decree of the preceding November in which the Convention offered its alliance to all the peoples against all the Kings. His native country was not, as Robespierre's, a collection of opinions, but like Mirabeau's, a power among powers, and, being a democrat, he was first and foremost a patriot. I have said that he had some success, and it consisted in this. First, that he communicated his energy and patriotism to the people; second, that he put France in touch with the foreign offices of the States with whom she was at war, found out how brittle was their alliance, and arrived at an understanding of their real objects. Two years later, a little more than a year after his own death, peace was made with some of those nations, and, before he had been dead three years, with all but England. This was largely due to the preliminary discussions of Danton's agents in the summer of 1793.

On 10th July the Committee of Public Safety was enlarged to twelve members and remodelled. The new Committee did not include Danton. From this time, although for a few more weeks he guided the negotiations with the powers through one of his followers on the Committee, his influence was declining. There were two reasons for this decline. An English statesman of the eighteenth century, whose ambitions and whose talents lay in the formation of great foreign schemes, once expressed his indifference to the daily intrigues of domestic politics. What was it to him whether this or that person was made a bishop or a judge? The conditions of the modern world have made such a lofty spirit the inevitable precursor of a fall. As with Carteret, so with Danton. He forgot that the showman who disdains to pull the strings becomes a puppet, and is allowed to act only until it is convenient to replace him in the box. But there was another reason—Danton was ill; the fever of unparalleled activities had for a time exhausted him. In the autumn he retired to his native country town, whither came the news of the successive horrors of the Reign of Terror, until in the winter, with his powers returning, he once more rushed into the battle. The consequences will be read in a later chapter.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE RULE OF THE GREAT COMMITTEE

THE remodelled Committee of Public Safety of 10th July is known as the Great Committee of Public Safety. It was owing to the energy, skill, and ruthlessness, but also to the utter devotion to their task, of the members of this Committee that the storms which a chapter or two ago we traced in their cloudy gathering and their terrible thunders upon the frontiers and in the west and south of France, storms which seemed to blot out hope for ever, were sent crashing back over the frontiers or dispersed in the blood-showers of the guillotine.

For here begins the Reign of Terror. It was seen in Chapter XXII that the insurrectionary force that was vital to the true Revolution made its last great and successful effort in expelling the Girondists from the Convention on 2nd June. The reader was then warned that he had seen the best of the Revolution, and was possibly inclined to doubt this whilst reading in subsequent chapters of the great military successes of the Revolutionary government during the latter half of 1793. But these successes were at the price of liberty; the wars of that momentous

year must be regarded as a prime cause of the reaction, if only because they so conditioned internal events as to maintain and be maintained by the Reign of Terror, and the dreadful days that have made the Revolution so terrible among the chapters of the history of the world.

It proved quite impossible to put in force any system of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity during the agony of the European struggle. The last set of men who tried to do so were the Girondists. They failed because of their idealism, but their idealism was their glory, and though the facts of the crisis condemned them to failure, they are remembered as having made a last stand for political liberty. They drew up, or rather their philosopher Condorcet drew up, a Constitution providing for universal suffrage and the referendum, for complete toleration and including safeguards for the liberty of the individual. But with sound ideas of political liberty, the Girondins did not realise that the economic state of the people rendered political freedom impossible without economic justice, and in more senses than one it may be said that the Girondists were martyrs to their principle of *laissez-faire*. They trusted to free-trade to feed the poor when trade was in a state of paralysis, just as they trusted to the free play of party politics to save France from domestic treason and from foreign levy.

The Committee of Public Safety, or rather Robespierre, altered Condorcet's scheme of a Constitution, disfranchising domestic servants, knocking

out the ballot, and in one or two other ways making it less egalitarian, but even thus they did not venture to put this Constitution into force. The Convention, the Commune, and the Committee of Public Safety continued to save France and to destroy liberty; and the Constitution of the Year I, as it was called, remained and remains a glorious piece of paper.

The Terror was a net spread over France. As the Committee of Public Safety acted in Paris, so did the thousands of revolutionary committees, popular societies, and local insurrectionary communes, under the guidance mostly of a few deputies of the Convention, act in the provinces. A great occasion for executions was afforded by the Girondists, who, having been placed under nominal arrest after their expulsion from the Convention, went everywhere, but especially to Normandy and the south, raising war against the Committee and Paris.

The man who now came definitely into the most conspicuous position with the decline of Danton and the remodelling of the Committee in July was Robespierre. We have noted the sentimentalism of his youth and the precise puritanical formalism of his manhood. It has also been pointed out that he showed himself a party tactician in the Revolution. Always moving in step with the Revolution, he never got before it as did Marat, who was a Terrorist before the terror and had consequently to fly from cellar to cellar until his hour dawned, nor did he lag behind it like Louis XVI, the Feuillants, and the Girondists. Robespierre espoused the side of the Commune just

before 10th August 1792, the correct date, and he chose the correct date of 2nd June 1793 to co-operate with it again. In this way he acquired immense popularity, both as a sound democrat and as a safe politician. His speeches, from being treatises on the principles of government became artful party moves, and it is only by allowing for this combination of popular theory in an age of theory with parliamentary instincts in a country where parliamentary institutions were new, that one can realise how such dull things as Robespierre's speeches delivered by the immaculate Robespierre could have dazzled so brilliant a nation as the French.

His ascendancy was partly due to the almost simultaneous disappearance of his two most formidable rivals for popularity. What was happening to Danton we have seen. The other rival was Marat, and three days after 10th July, when Danton dropped out of the Committee of Public Safety, Charlotte Corday stabbed Marat.

She was a young woman of Normandy in whom the love of country was a pure passion. Her family was royalist, but at her trial she declared herself to have been a republican before the Revolution, and she had inspired herself by reading Plutarch just as the Girondists had done. When the Girondists, and among them Brissot, the lover of Madame Roland, came into Normandy in June, Charlotte Corday d'Armans was ready to believe that the Mountain which was inaugurating the Terror was the cause of all those afflictions of France which she felt as her own.

Whether royalist or Girondist she would be prepared to consider that the cause of the slaughter was Marat, who had long been advocating it, and who now came from his hiding-place into the seat of power. Her deed is marked by clear and unfaltering resolution from beginning to end, from the moment when she left her Bible open in her bedroom at the story of Judith, to the moment when she struck Marat so unerringly that the Prosecutor at her trial insinuated that a blow like that could only have been the result of practice. Governments that make such people as Charlotte resolve to go to the guillotine rather than live under them, receive a legacy of destruction from the martyrs they kill.

Marat's character is a paradox to those who live in ordinary times, and perhaps we come nearest to understanding him when we read Victor Hugo's unsurpassed novel of *Ninety-Three*. There Marat scarcely gets justice, but we do see how certain men who combined much knowledge with fanaticism, faced the horrible dilemma which occurs when the salvation of the poor whom they love, seems only able to be purchased by the slaughter of thousands. The horrible futility of the Terror, as it ran its darkening and fœtid course for twelve disastrous months after Charlotte Corday's heroic deed, condemns the reasoning of both murderess and victim, but the exalted altruism of both is beyond question.

The death of Marat helped Robespierre to step into the centre of the limelight. Whether Robespierre ever in any real sense governed France is

quite another matter. His abilities were academic and Parliamentary, not administrative at all, and the Committee of Public Safety contained several men of great administrative ability, among whom Carnot, "Organiser of Victory," was the chief. Robespierre could force himself upon the Committee late in July, just as he had forced it to receive his friends Couthon and St. Just on 10th July, because he had more influence than anybody else in the Convention, and more popularity than anybody else in republican circles elsewhere. But once in the Committee it was a matter of sending the recruits and supplies to the front and of sending internal enemies or suspected enemies to the Revolutionary Tribunal and the guillotine, matters in which Carnot and his like were as necessary as Robespierre. Robespierre was very useful to the Committee because he brought them his popularity and his ascendancy in the Convention, but Carnot was absolutely essential, because the only thing that made people put up with the reign of terror was the continuance of the victories which Carnot and one or two more were organising. Luckily for Robespierre these one or two included his own supporter St. Just, a devoted youth of earnest, pale visage and furious republican zeal, whom we have seen very active and effective in Alsace.

Among the most urgent questions with which the Convention and the Committee that dominated it had to deal was the economic chaos. The *laissez-faire* principles of the Girondists now gave place to the principle of the maximum, which was carried into

law by the Convention on 29th September 1793. A maximum price was fixed for the necessaries of life. The law of the maximum has been condemned by most historians, but the maximum was only fixed as a result of careful inquiry into the rates at which commodities could be profitably sold. It at least had two good effects which helped to tide France over the worst dangers. Firstly, it checked that horrible gambling in the people's food which the extraordinary conditions accentuated; it was no longer possible to hope for a vast fortune by holding back wheat from the market until starvation prices prevailed. Secondly, it must be remembered that France was flooded with assignats, a paper currency, secured on Church lands, and most recklessly inflated. The law of the maximum, by fixing the price of the articles of widest sale, gave an enforced value to the paper money with which they were mostly bought, as was seen when in 1794 the law of the maximum was abolished, and the assignats became almost worthless.

There were, however, two laws of September 1793 which consolidated the power of the Committee of Public Safety and at the same time helped to destroy the revolutionary spirit. These were the Law of Forty Halfpence and the Law of Suspects.

The Law of Forty Halfpence, *Loi des Quarante Sous*, decreed the daily payment of that amount to those people who attended the evening meetings of the sections, which, as has been shown in an earlier chapter, were the basis of the popular power of the

Commune. These meetings, which, as was there explained, were an attempt at direct domocracy, reached the climax of their effectiveness in the June rising that ended the power of the Gironde. The war perforce enhanced the concentration of power in the hands of the Committee of Public Safety and proportionately decreased the influence of the Commune and the meetings of the sections. At the time when the Law of Forty Halfpence was passed, the Convention was under the sway of Robespierre and the terror of the Committee, which, in its jealous despotism, saw in the Commune no longer the ally which had helped its own rise, but a rival power in the field of politics and administration. The Law of Forty Halfpence is therefore to be regarded not as a means of strengthening the Commune and the sections, but as a means of making the meetings of the sections dependent upon the Committee and the Convention, and thus of separating the Commune from its roots in the sections.

The meetings of the sections might well attract attention in the autumn of 1793; there more than anywhere was the decay of the revolutionary power making itself apparent; there was indicated one of the most fatal of all the developments by which the Revolution was digging its own grave. In spite of the military successes of the Committee and in spite of the recent insurrection of June, a class of newly rich, created out of the needs of the Revolution itself, speculators of all kinds, contractors, financiers, holders of assignats, purchasers of confiscated lands,

was growing up in society. These people had got all that the Revolution could give them, and their gains could only be secured by bringing the Revolution to an end. They began to associate with returning royalists and to form a social class where the manners and the luxury of rank and station were adopted in open defiance of the cynical simplicity of the period following the death of the King. To be unkempt or shabby had been the rule among hundreds of people who felt the need of some means to allay the suspicion of the crowds and to avoid being dragged before the Revolutionary Tribunal as secret royalists. Now there was a class bent on restoring respectability and anxious to return to peaceful days, and this class included many royalists new or old. Their young men began to attend the evening meetings of the sections, to gain influence there, and were even able to exercise by rioting a kind of terrorism over the tired working people who had laboured all day and were beginning to feel the chill of disillusion after so many hopes and so much blood.

The other important law besides the Law of the Maximum and the Law of Forty Halfpence, which the Committee exacted from the Convention in September 1793, was the Law of Suspects. By this law it became possible to arrest all former nobles and priests—and there were many of both in the Republic,—and all who might show slackness in supporting the new régime. This law was supported by the Communists like Hébert, who were more

thoroughly wedded to Terrorist methods than was the great Committee itself. When it is stated that the Revolutionary Tribunals in Paris and the provinces, finding the prisons filled with persons arrested under this law, cleared them by sending daily batches to the guillotine after the merest mockery of a trial, it will be realised to what an extent the guillotine had got out of hand and was working its unholy will upon the French nation; it will then be possible to understand what was the Terror in its later and more horrible and useless phase.

CHAPTER XXVII

MEMORABLE DEATHS

ALL this while Marie Antoinette was in prison. Her position grew gradually more dangerous in proportion as the people came to look upon her as a hostage, whilst devotion to the Queen was one among the moral forces of royalist insurrection, and her life became a pawn in the game of diplomacy.

In September her peril was increased by the preponderance in the Commune of Hébert, who seemed to breathe his native air amid the thickening reek of the Terror. Whilst this man predominated in its ally the Commune, the Committee of Public Safety was pushed beyond its own wishes in the direction of bloodshed.

The position of Marie Antoinette if she came to be tried could hardly be stronger than that of Louis. To whatever lengths he had proceeded in treason, in calling in the foreign powers and in plotting war against France, his wife had proceeded further. Moreover, since January men had become much more reckless in condemning people to death.

On the part of the Committee, and with the concurrence of Danton, negotiations were entered into with Austria. The neutrality of certain Italian States

was to be purchased by the surrender of the Queen to her friends. At this point it would seem that the Emperor had an opportunity of saving his aunt's life, as it is most probable that Danton and Robespierre would have been glad to save the Queen; only sufficient compensation in diplomacy must be obtained, to serve as an excuse if Hébert should accuse them of royalism. But Maret and Semonville, the French envoys, were seized in Italy by the Austrians, and imprisoned. This led immediately to the trial of Marie Antoinette and her execution on 16th October, the day of the battle of Wattignies.

Then came the turn of the Girondists. Those of them who went through the provinces inciting to revolt against the Republic were doing a bad thing for their friends left in Paris. On 24th October twenty-two Girondists went before the Revolutionary Tribunal. The eloquence that had been the glory of the Legislative Assembly was now nearly effective to save them even in that gloomy hall where Fouquier-Tinville incarnated the evil genius of the Revolution. It was found necessary, even with a packed jury, to procure a special law hurriedly from the Convention, empowering the jurors to declare that they had heard enough and were ready to condemn. Here again, as in the case of Marie Antoinette, the faction that most zealously forwarded the cause of death was that of Hébert.

On the last day of the month, Vergniaud, Brissot, and their twenty comrades went to the guillotine singing the "Marseillaise," all except one, who had

stabbed himself on hearing the sentence, but whose corpse was not spared by the executioner.

By November, Brissot, Guadet and the other Girondins-errant who had hoped to rouse the provinces were hunted men, tramping through forests, creeping by night through the villages and mostly hiding by day. One by one they perished except Louvet, who escaped to Switzerland and lived to write their memoirs. The great Condorcet was captured, but the next morning he was dead, a Latin classic in one pocket, poison in the other.

Madame Roland had been imprisoned in June. She spent her time in prison writing the memoirs that have given her a place among the world's famous women. Brought forth to give evidence at the trial of her friends, she was disappointed, by the cutting short of the trial, of her intention to "thunder without reserve," as she said, "and be done with it." She had contemplated suicide in prison, but had put aside the thought in the hope of being allowed to speak at the trial of her party. On 8th November her own turn came, and on the scaffold she had courage to spare for the support of a fellow-victim. Before many months had passed her enemies were overthrown, and under a new régime her memoirs were published in Paris in 1795. But her husband, when he heard of her death, went out into a field and ran a rapier through his heart. His body was found in a sitting posture against an oak, and at his feet a paper containing his farewell to "a world polluted with crimes."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE TRIUMPH AND FALL OF HÉBERT

THE man who was most identified with the increasing violence of the Terror was Hébert, and the last months of 1793 take their character from him. Another aspect of the Revolution was by the same man at the same time rendered violent and tyrannical. This was the dechristianisation movement. Danton and Robespierre, after the Civil Constitution of the clergy had brought religion under popular control, were anxious to tolerate the priests and their work. Hébert and his ally Chaumette were anxious to suppress them. In the period of Hébert's ascendancy the dechristianisation movement ruined itself by its precipitancy. The calendar was altered so as to destroy the seven-day week and to introduce a week of ten days. Incidentally, the names of all the months were changed and a new era of years was introduced, the Year 1 commencing with September 1792, when the King was formally deposed.

Gobel, Archbishop of Paris, was discovered to be of no particular religion in private, and was induced to come before the Convention with great pomp of

laying down his spiritual office and confessing a life-long hypocrisy. A long train of other priests followed his example; but Grégoire, Bishop of Blois, a great republican but a zealous Catholic, henceforth always appeared in the Convention clad in episcopal garments, defying the spirit of the place—it was a piece of daring more praiseworthy because of more significance than Lord Nelson's parade of his medals. Gradually Hébert, Chaumette, and their party brought oppression to bear on the priests, first closing the churches, then forbidding all religious rites out of doors. On 10th November took place the Festival of Liberty and Reason in Notre Dame.

Soon after this Danton came back to Paris and politics. He saw that the Revolution had got into a horrible byway of bloodshed that seemed endless; he regarded Hébert as the madman who was forcing the hand on the helm and must be crushed. Danton's obvious course, dictated by his great political common sense, which had by this time quite taken the place of revolutionary faith, was to seek the alliance of Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety against Hébert and what continued to call itself by the glorious name of the Commune.

Robespierre and the Committee were glad to be rid of Hébert, whose irrational bloodthirstiness was antipathetic to their calculating and purposeful callousness. Hébert had gathered the reckless elements of the great city into a power that was dangerous to the Convention, where Robespierre desired to rule by the colder and more purposeful terror of the Com-

mittee, mixed with his Parliamentary craft. He therefore wished to fell Hébert, as a charioteer might wish to bring down a runaway horse that was plunging towards a precipice.

Camille Desmoulins now used all his journalistic ability to forward the return to sane politics. He and his wife lived in the same house with Danton, and they worked eagerly at the campaign against the Hébertists. Danton, before he entered the Convention, had been the strength of the Commune and had based himself on the Cordeliers' Club. Hébert was now not only the leading figure in the Commune, but completely dominated the Cordeliers. Desmoulins had the happy thought of appealing to memories of the healthy days of the Revolution, and called his new paper the *Old Cordelier*. His phrase about the victims of the guillotine, "Have not these men also wives and children?" is the keynote of a music that was beginning to be heard by the people as they recovered from the bewildering effect of the Terror and begun to wonder when it would end. Thus supported in the press, and by the union of Robespierre's cool tact with Danton's thunder in the Convention, the Committee dared the stroke that sent Hébert and his friends before the Revolutionary Tribunal—that is to say, to the guillotine. The executions took place on 24th March 1794. So far was Hébert from representing the true traditions of the Commune, that Paris let him die without an insurrection.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE FALL OF DANTON

THE Terror did not cease with Hébert's fall. It was by no means the intention of Robespierre and the Committee that it should. One speaks of Robespierre and the Committee, because although Robespierre was a member of the Committee, his power rested partly, as we have seen, upon a basis external to the Committee. He used his Parliamentary skill and his gift for spokesmanship to make himself very important to the Committee, just as he used the Terror inspired by the Committee to give effectiveness to his manœuvres in the Convention. After Hébert's fall he remodelled the Commune and filled it with his creatures. Another source of his power was the great care he had taken to fill the secret police with his agents. Right across the ambitions of this man, hardly perhaps cruel in the sense of delighting in suffering, but not human enough to have his quiet social and musical evenings disturbed in the blackest and bloodiest weeks of the Terror, came the mass of blustering and practical humanity that was Danton. Danton was back in the Convention; Danton thundered his disgust at useless horrors;

Danton's eloquence supplied moral energy to men who lacked courage rather than sense, and the great Centre party, the Marsh, was visibly shaken; and out of doors, the paper that flew from hand to hand, written with the keenest journalistic talent of all the Revolution was the *Old Cordelier* of Desmoulins, inspired by Danton. Robespierre, the circumspect and self-possessed, was becoming enamoured of power. He did not love the Terror because it was the Terror; he cherished his own schemes for bringing it to an end. But he was not going to bob like a cork in the seething wake of a giant like Danton, and he decided to strike down the disturbing champion of clemency first, and bring the Terror to an end in his own way afterwards. The other members of the Committee likewise desired the Terror to continue. Couthon and St. Just were henchmen of Robespierre; Carnot, the relentless and intense organiser of Victory, was bringing the blood and iron of the nation to bear upon his preparation for a successful campaign. His government was based on terror, on the arrest and execution of suspects; on this depended the alacrity with which his conscriptions were answered, or so it seemed to him, and he did not wish that basis disturbed. Months later, when the Terror was over, and he recognised how frightful was the stain upon his own hands, he went into exile to Switzerland in order to get out of the country where his name was a name of salvation and of loathing. Billaud-Varenne and Collot d'Herbois, from similar motives or from the lust of power, or from the mere dread at what would

happen if people ceased to fear them, were determined to support Carnot and Robespierre in crushing Danton. Danton's great sayings are well known. He was warned, he was advised to fly, but, as he said, he could not carry his country with him on the soles of his boots. There was no rising in his favour; the Commune, which we may now describe as the machinery of insurrection gone rusty, was in the hands of his enemy. At his trial his eloquence had an effect similar but more powerful than Vergniaud's; once more a decree of the Convention had to be hurried through to cut matters short. What with Danton's crushing vindication of what he had merited from the Republic, and Desmoulins' insupportable repartee, the judges were being turned into prisoners at the bar. The whole group of the Indulgents, as they were called, went to the guillotine, Danton supporting the more excitable Desmoulins with his broader courage at the end. It was 5th April 1794. Mirabeau had wished he could leave his head to his successors; Danton, with equal force and greater subtlety of penetration, wished that he could bequeath his virility to Robespierre.

CHAPTER XXX

THE PONTIFICATE AND FALL OF ROBESPIERRE

ROBESPIERRE was a man of theory. In his youth he had made a pilgrimage to the aged Rousseau, his philosophical master. Now that the Hébertists and Dantonists were gone, Robespierre stood before the world as the master of France. He appeared more of a master than he was, but he had more power than most English Prime Ministers. There was only one group of men who shared his power, and they only shared it behind the scenes, in the secret discussions of the Committee of Public Safety, or in the provinces, where Fouché, Tallien, and Carrier exploited a Terror more murderous than that of Paris. Fouché at Lyons, Tallien at Bordeaux, and Carrier at Nantes were earning the infamy which will probably stick to their names as long as those tattered names hang together in the world's memory. Carrier was the worst; his drowning of hundreds of men, women, and children together in the Loire with the professed purpose of exterminating the rebel population is the most infamous thing in the Revolution, and recalls the most infamous passage in

Machiavelli. With these men Robespierre, with his love of order, and his determination to arrange the external world according to the neat Rousseauan theories in his head, was bound ultimately to have a deadly struggle. But first he was destined to pose before the world for a brief space as the high priest of theoretical Republicanism.

A priest must have a God, and Robespierre determined to efface the traditions of Hébert's Feast of Reason and Liberty by a Festival of the Supreme Being. Accordingly, his meagre figure, in sky-blue coat and nankeens, and carrying a large bouquet, was to be seen in the fine June weather marching alone several paces in front of the ordered ranks of the members of the Convention, to officiate at the restoration of religion in a vague theistic form before a large crowd of assembled Parisians and visitors. It was the pinnacle of his career.

Then began the final struggle. Robespierre struck first. He had a law carried in the Convention empowering the Revolutionary Tribunal to put men to death without hearing their defence. The Revolutionary Tribunal was entirely devoted to Robespierre, who had thus armed himself with a deadly weapon. The law is known as the Law of Prairial, that being the name of the month in the Revolutionary Calendar when it was passed. The 22nd Prairial was the 10th June.

The battleground would be the Convention, and the antagonists intrigued with the large Centre party, that consisted of cowards and bewildered persons who

lacked either the courage or the insight and skill for initiative, and who yet might give to one party or the other the justification of legality. Robespierre had swayed them almost exclusively since the fall of Danton, and so long as Robespierre represented the terrible Committee. Now that the Committee was split into parties, and the party hostile to Robespierre was in the majority and supported by Tallien, Fouché, Carrier, and their friends, the commonplace men of the Centre began to feel that there was some chance of ending the fearful time that was turning their hair grey. They may have hoped much from Robespierre, but his Law of Prairial, even while they voted for it, made them despair of a future in his hands. One thing that made them dread him was that seventy-three of the Girondists, who had been arrested in the previous summer, were still under lock and key, and their friends knew that he had only to send them before the Revolutionary Tribunal to get them all killed in one day. An attack on Robespierre must therefore be sudden and sharp, too soon over to permit of reprisals.

There are stories of people who saw their names on lists of the doomed which Robespierre had among his memoranda. Carnot is said to have seen his own. This represents the state of the case, even if it is not literally true. In the coming struggle Robespierre could count on the Commune, the Revolutionary Tribunal and the Jacobin Club. He had against him the majority of members of the Committee of Public Safety. The question was one

of capturing the Convention, for with such cards as he had and with his oratorical craft—not oratorical power, be it noted—for making the most of his vague possibilities of victory, he might yet cajole and overawe the deputies.

The plan of his enemies was to prevent him getting a hearing. The fateful day was the 9th Thermidor (27th July), and the President of the Assembly happened to be one of themselves, Collot d'Herbois. On the previous night at the Jacobin Club Robespierre had triumphed, and some of his enemies had been roughly handled. When St. Just attempted to open the debate with what his fellow-members of the Committee knew to be an attack upon them,—for they had made him admit as much when they saw him writing it in the room where they all worked together at ruling France,—Tallien rushed into the hall and attempted to shout him down. Then Robespierre tried in vain to get a hearing. The President, as the tumult raged, used his bell, not to enforce order, but to prevent Robespierre or any of his friends being heard. Disorderly groups hustled one another on the tribune ; the galleries were filled with the public; it became known that, by means of the Commune, Robespierre's friends, led by Hanriot, who had pointed the guns against the Girondins, were raising the population of Paris. Time was becoming of supreme importance, and the Convention could not be relied on if Robespierre should regain their ear. "Down with the tyrant!" rang on all sides. If he had been a man of Mira-

beau's or Danton's physical predominance of bulk and voice he might have overawed the Convention or appealed successfully to the crowds. But he failed utterly. Then he rushed down from the tribune and attempted to address himself to the members of the Right. "Come no further," shouted one, "Vergniaud sat here!" When he turned livid and foamed at the mouth, some one cried: "The blood of Danton chokes him!" The scene was horribly prolonged, but at length Robespierre and his group of supporters were placed under arrest on the motion of an unknown member.

Then the battle assumed a strange form. Robespierre knew that if he could get sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal he would be acquitted. He therefore made every effort to be received into prison, but at none of the prisons would they have him. Then he took refuge at the police office. Meanwhile his friends, at the Hôtel de Ville, the headquarters of the Commune, were trying to raise an insurrection, and sending to urge Robespierre to join them. It was not until nightfall that he could be persuaded.

The Convention had debated helplessly for hours, but on hearing this news they declared him outlawed, and sent deputies on horseback with torches to carry all over Paris the summons to support law and order. In this way a considerable force was collected and proceeded to the Hôtel de Ville, where the crowds that had gathered to support Robespierre had melted away, showing how utterly obsolete the Commune, as machinery of insurrection, had become.

Robespierre and his friends were in a room at the head of a flight of stairs. They had just persuaded him to sign an inflammatory proclamation, and his pen had traced the first two letters of his name, when the enemy burst into the room. A pistol-shot rang out, and Robespierre's jaw was shattered. It is not known whether he fired at himself or whether one of his enemies shot him. His brother, who was devoted to him, and had been the friend of Napoleon Bonaparte, was badly injured in an attempt to escape from a window. Only one man got away; the rest were captured easily.

This happened early in the morning. At four in the afternoon Robespierre and his friends were carried to the guillotine through an insulting crowd.

With him ended the Reign of Terror. For some months before his Law of Prairial the number of victims in Paris had been 32 a week—after that law they were 196 a week on the average. But the men who destroyed Robespierre, though they were worse men than he was, had gained their victory on condition that the Terror should end. Hundreds were released from prison the next day, and the outburst of jubilation that everywhere hailed the end of the Terror made it quite impossible to impose it again. France had awakened from the nightmare.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE THERMIDORIAN REACTION

THE men who had overthrown Robespierre wished to continue the Terror, but the fall of the dictator so emboldened that large number of people who were determined to end it, that its continuance proved impossible. On the day after Robespierre's death Barère made a speech in the Convention against any relaxation of the system of Terror; "Beware, above all things, of that fatal moderation which talks of peace and of clemency," he said. Within a fortnight he changed his tone; "The time has come," he said, politician-like, "at which clemency may be indulged without danger."

Events were moving as rapidly as at any period of the Revolution. The Commune came to an end with Robespierre; the Committee of Public Safety was reconstructed a few days later; his principal enemies were included, and a system of rapid change of membership was adopted. People came out of prison in hundreds, society was reorganised under the auspices of the vulgar, newly-rich class, and ostentation became the order of the day.

The Jacobin Club was closed in November, and

the abolition of the Law of Forty Sous had struck a blow at the Committee's control of public meetings. The men were at first harder to hit than the system, but their turn came. Billaud, Collot, Barère, and Vadier were brought to trial in March. Billaud and Collot were transported, Barère escaped and led the life of a wretched political hireling and spy under Napoleon. Fouquier-Tinville, the merry devil of the Revolutionary Tribunal, went to the guillotine, jeered at in his turn as he had jeered at his victims.

Three attempts were made in 1795 to interfere by violence with the proceedings of the Convention. The arraignment of the Terrorists in March led to an attack on the Convention by an armed crowd on the 1st of April, but the armed forces of the reactionary sections drove out the assailants. Everywhere the gilded youth, *jeunesse dorée*, mobbed all the Jacobins who dared to appear in the streets, and in some provincial towns large numbers of republicans were massacred. In May there was another unsuccessful insurrection. Led by a crowd of women, shouting for "Bread and the Constitution of 'Ninety-Three!" the inhabitants of the Faubourg St. Antoine for the last time invaded the Hall of the Convention to the sound of the tocsin and the roll of drums. They terrified the members opposed to them, put their own party in possession of the meeting, and passed a number of decrees. Again they were driven out; the decrees were rescinded and the Jacobin deputies put to death.

The third affair was a battle in the streets. A

committee had been appointed, under the guidance of Sieyès, to draw up a new Constitution. In this Constitution, the teaching of experience was followed. The Executive was not to be too weak, as in 1791; but it was not to dominate the new legislative body as the Committee of Public Safety had dominated the Convention; Executive and Legislature were to be separated. The Executive was to consist of five directors; the Legislature of two houses, a council of ancients and a council of 500. In order to avoid the mistake that had been made in 1791, when the Constituent Assembly had robbed its successor of the experience of the members of the earlier body, the Convention went to the other extreme and ordained that two-thirds of its own members should have seats in the new Legislature.

This caused the trouble. The royalists and the democrats had both hoped to overthrow the narrow oligarchy of the Thermidorians, as Robespierre's conquerors were called. Accordingly, they demanded the repeal of the Law of Two-Thirds. There was a battle in the streets of Paris in the month of Vendémiaire in the Revolutionary Calendar—October 1795, to be intelligible—and the royalist and other insurrectionaries were defeated by Napoleon Bonaparte, who commanded for the Convention. The Directory was then established; it lasted until Napoleon overthrew it in 1799.

In 1794 the foreign war turned all in favour of France. The dangers of 1793 no longer remained. The victories of Tourcoing and Fleurus threw

Belgium again into French hands, and early in the next year Pichegru was in Amsterdam. The success of the French arms was almost equally striking on the Rhine and in the passes of the Western Alps. In 1795 peace was made with all the hostile powers except England, Austria, and Sardinia—that is to say, Spain, Holland, Prussia, and the lesser German and Italian princes, including the Pope, came to terms. France gained the Rhine frontier, and the Spanish half of San Domingo; Holland became a dependent ally of France.

On the whole, therefore, the war of the many with one did not reflect much glory on the allies. It is true that they did irreparable harm to the Revolution, and that all the latter part of the Terror would have been avoided had it not been for the war. But since France could not have her needed revolution without foreign interference and bloodshed, there is infinite cause for congratulation in the fact that France was victorious. Deeply marred as were the institutions of the French State by the deadly pressure of the conflict, it would have been a calamity to the human race if France had failed to hold her own in 1793.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE RESULTS OF THE REVOLUTION

LIBERTY, Equality, and Fraternity were the watchwords of the Revolution. During the six crowded years that have been the subject of this book, those principles had shone forth in splendour, had been stained with blood, had been dragged in the mire, had been snatched up and carried by heroes to fields of glory or disaster. The States-General, representing the venerable traditions of centuries, deeply tinctured with a philosophy in advance of the facts of contemporary life, and consciously remodelling the institutions of their country, had written as upon the shores of a land of promise that all men are free and equal. It was no longer merely a question of wisely ordering the affairs of an embarrassed realm; men were born free and are everywhere in chains; let the chains be struck off, and brotherhood proclaimed. Whilst the legislators delare freedom and equality, the people fraternise. Hope was everywhere bright, an immeasurable dawn. What though the Bastille was taken in the old bloody way; let there be a festival annually to pro-

claim that old things are passed away and that all things are become new.

The lawyers did their part. In so far as inequality depended upon the legal status of a privileged class it was replaced by the principle of civil equality. Henceforth all men were to come before the same courts and be judged by the same rules.

But the stress of conflict, the reaction of stubborn human material, had in the political sphere thwarted the complete application of the principle of equality. The chain of mischances by which democratic aspiration was baulked has been described. In the Constitution of 1795 a property qualification became the condition of complete citizenship, and though the claims of women were demonstrated by the wisest writers and thinkers, they were not made good in constitutional enactment.

Whilst political enfranchisement was denied to women and to most of the manual workers, there was a still more fatal failure to recognise that the basis of political equality and freedom requires that the physical necessities of life must never be allowed so to fall into the control of a few as to enable those few to control the lives of the many. Some indeed recognised the truth, but very few of them understood the necessary safeguards of economic freedom and equality. The terrible financial and military pressure under which the Revolution was effected, forced the leading politicians into an alliance with men who could supply material means. We have seen how a movement that started by an attack upon

privilege gradually fell under the control of a financial power more strongly entrenched than the power that had been based on privilege. The most ruthless of all powers, that which is founded upon ultimate physical hunger, grew during the six years of revolution at an unprecedented rate. The patriots at last were hopelessly enmeshed by the men who bought and sold for private gain on a vast scale the ground on which men dwelt and the daily food of the poor —not only bought and sold it, but systematically refrained from supplying it until, as of old, "men bowed their necks in the evil days for meat" and became their thralls. Among the signs of thraldom, be it observed, that freedom of association was denied to men; what we call the "right of combination," without which hungry desperate men cannot be secured from the tendency of other men in like desperation, to sell their common birthright for most inadequate pottage. To achieve this right in even a moderate degree took three-quarters of a century.

But meanwhile the gigantic war that had been started by the Revolution led Frenchmen to death and fame in every part of Europe and beyond. A great captain arose whose genius and energy gave to the struggle an intensity and extension which revealed for the first time to modern Europe the vast possibilities that lie in the concentration of power. Side by side with this result came the realisation that everywhere the foundations of the old order were enfeebled. It was but another phase of the organisation of power. Just at the time when theor-

ists had concluded that material production could be most rapidly increased by the absence of restrictions to competition, the needs of the colossal war stimulated the most reckless production of material wealth. In the deadly struggle with Napoleon a whole generation of English childhood was swept into the rising Babylon of the factories, and a generation of human beings more numerous than had ever before occupied these islands grew up into the slavery of international competition.

The war of Europe against the great Emperor came to an end with a temporary triumph of the powers of reaction, but privilege of the old sort was doomed. For thirty years and more the greater part of Europe, thrust back under the historic dynasties, underwent the inevitable changes which, on the one hand, the great ideas of the Revolution, and, on the other hand, the development of the capitalist industrial system were bringing about. Then the cry of Freedom began to be heard again upon battlefields, but this time it was freedom of nationality, little more than national independence.

The French Revolution awoke humanity from an agelong sleep, and the cramping traditions of many centuries were dissolved. But its watchwords of Liberty and Equality have not been translated into fact. The wars which followed vastly stimulated the organisation of power, but that power was consolidated in the hands of the few, and used principally for the private gain of the few. Until the unprecedented control which man has gained over natural resources

can be placed in the hands of chosen and trusted persons, and used for the purpose of freeing from the degrading motive of individual hunger the servants of humanity, there can be no realisation of the ideal of political liberty.

IMPORTANT DATES

1774	. . .	Accession of Louis XVI. Turgot made Controller-General of the Finances
1776	. . .	Publication of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Declaration of American Independence. Dismissal of Turgot
1787.	Feb. 22.	The Notables meet
1789.	May 4.	The States-General meet at Versailles
„	June 17.	The Third Estate adopts the style of the National Assembly
„	„ 20.	The Oath in the Tennis-Court
„	„ 23.	The Royal Session
„	„ 27.	The victory of the Third Estate
„	July 14.	The fall of the Bastille
„	Aug. 4.	Supposed abolition of feudal dues
„	Oct. 6.	The Royal Family and the Assembly come to Paris
„	Nov. 2.	Nationalisation of ecclesiastical property
„	Dec. 21.	Issue of assignats
1790.	July 12.	The Civil Constitution of the Clergy decreed
„	„ 14.	The first Feast of the Federation
„	Nov.	Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* published
1791.	Mar. 4.	Death of Mirabeau
„	June 21.	The flight to Varennes
„	July 17.	Bloodshed in the Champ de Mars

1791.	Aug. 27.	Declaration of Pilnitz
„	Oct. 1.	The opening of the Legislative Assembly
1792.	Mar. 1.	Fall of the Feuillant Ministry
„	Apr. 20.	War with Austria declared
„	June 20.	The King holds his own in the Tuileries
„	July 12.	The King dismisses the Girondist Ministry
„	„ 27.	The Duke of Brunswick's manifesto
„	Aug. 10.	The attack on the Tuileries. FALL OF THE MONARCHY
„	„ 20.	The defection of Lafayette
„	„ 23.	The fall of Longwy
„	Sep. 2 to „ 6.	Massacre
„	„ 20.	Valmy
„	„ 21.	The Convention
„	„ 22.	Proclamation of the Republic
„	Nov. 6.	Jemappes
1793.	Jan. 21.	Death of Louis XVI
„	Feb. 1.	War declared against England and Holland
„	Mar. 14.	Rising in *La Vendée*
„	„ 18.	Defeat at Neerwinden
„	„ 29.	The Revolutionary Tribunal
„	Apr. 5.	Defection of Dumouriez
„	„ 6.	The First Committee of Public Safety
„	May 3.	The *Maximum*
„	July 10.	The Great Committee of Public Safety
„	„ 13.	Assassination of Marat
„	„ 26.	Fall of Valenciennes
„	Aug. 28.	Admiral Hood occupies Toulon
„	Sep. 5.	Law of the Forty Halfpence
„	„ 8.	Hondschoote
„	Oct. 16.	Wattignies. Execution of the Queen

1793. Nov. 10. The Feast of Reason
„ Dec. 12. Le Mans } The Vendéan rebels crushed
„ „ 23. Savenay }
1794. Mar. 24. Hébert guillotined
„ Apr. 25. Danton guillotined
„ June 8. Feast of the Supreme Being
„ „ 10. Law of 22 Prairial
„ „ 25. Fleurus
„ July 28. Robespierre guillotined. The Commune abolished
„ Nov. 11. The Jacobin Club closed
1795. Jan. 19. Pichegru enters Amsterdam
„ Oct. 1. Belgium annexed
„ „ 26. End of the Convention

APPENDIX A[1]

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATES-GENERAL

ALTHOUGH the intention of Louis XVI and his ministers had been to revive the mediæval institution that had last met in 1614, this proved impossible without several modifications. The system adopted for the meeting of 1789 was as follows:—

I. *Electoral Divisions.*—These had to be constituted afresh, the old *baillages* and *sénéchaussées* having in many places disappeared, their boundaries being lost beyond recall. There was no attempt, except in the case of a few of the greatest cities, to distinguish between rural and urban areas; the towns were included with their surrounding districts.

II. *The Representation of the First Estate, or Clergy.*—The archbishops, bishops, abbots, and beneficed clergymen voted for their representatives directly. The Cathedral Chapters, monks, and nuns, and the majority of the country curés chose electors to vote on their behalf.

III. *The Second Estate, or Nobles* of each *baillage* or *sénéchaussée* chose their representatives by direct election.

[1] This Appendix is an abridgement of the account of the subject contained in the "Cambridge Modern History," and is inserted here by the kind permission of the Syndics of the University Press.

IV. *The Third Estate* were not elected on a simple geographical principle. In the towns members of trade gilds and corporations chose their representatives separately; but taxpayers outside the guilds were separately represented. The guilds were divided into two kinds, and those representing the "liberal arts" had more representatives than the others. The representatives of these three classes in the towns then united with the representatives of the rural districts in the same *baillage* or *sénéchaussée*, and by a very indirect method, *i.e.* after first reducing their own number in most cases to one-fourth, selected the deputies for the Third Estate.

V. *Exceptions.*—The chief exceptions to the system above described were (*a*) Dauphiné, where a meeting of the provincial Estates had preceded the summons of the States-General, and had decided, without regard to royal authority, upon a method peculiar to their own province; they first doubled their own number, and then themselves elected representatives for the three orders. (*b*) Paris, where the nobles, owing to their number, chose their deputies indirectly.

APPENDIX B

THE REVOLUTIONARY CALENDAR

THE following scheme, drawn up by Carlyle, enables one to transpose into the ordinary style dates given in the style of the Revolution:—

"September 22nd of 1792 is Vendémiaire 1st of Year One, and the new months are all of thirty days each, therefore—

To the number of the day in—	Add	We have the number of the day in—	Days.
Vendémiaire	21	September	30
Brumaire	21	October	31
Frimaire	20	November	30
Nivose	20	December	31
Pluviose	19	January	31
Ventose	18	February	28
Germinal	20	March	31
Floréal	19	April	30
Prairial	19	May	31
Messidor	18	June	30
Thermidor	18	July	31
Fructidor	17	August	31

"There are five Sansculottides, and in leap year a sixth, to be added at the end of Fructidor."

Paris
1789
Champs Elysées
Cours de la Reine
River Seine
Champ de Mars
Hotel des Invalides
Palais Royal
Palais du Louvre
Palais de Justice
Sorbonne
Les Chartreux
Luxembourg Gardens
Jardin des Tuileries
Pont Royal
Pont Neuf
Pont Louis XVI
Hôpital de la Salpetrière
Hôpital St Louis
Les Gobelins
Observatoire
Champs Elysées
Avenue de Neuilly
Rue de Rivoli
Rue de Sèvre
Rue de Grenelle
Rue de Varenne
Rue de Richelieu
Rue St Honoré
Rue St Antoine
Rue du Temple
Rue St Jacques
Rue de la Harpe
Rue St Victor
Rue de Bercy
Rue de Vaugirard
Rue de Seine
Rue de Lille
Rue de Bourbon
Rue de Poitiers
Rue de Bac
Rue de Tournon
Rue de Condé
Rue de Conti
Rue de Nevers
Rue de Mazarine
Rue de Fossés St Germain l'Auxerrois
Rue de la Monnaie
Rue de la Ferronnerie
Rue St Denis
Rue St Martin
Rue du Chantre
Rue de la Vieille Draperie
Rue de la Vieille Monnaie
Rue de la Vieille Halle aux Bleds
Rue de la Vieille Tannerie
Rue de la Vieille Bouclerie
Rue de la Vieille Lanterne
Rue de la Vieille Pelleterie
Rue de la Vieille Ferraille
Rue de la Vieille Boucherie
Rue de la Vieille Poterie
Rue de la Vieille Corderie
Rue de la Vieille Tuilerie
Rue de la Vieille Verrerie
Rue de la Vieille Fripperie
Rue de la Vieille Orfèvrerie
Rue de la Vieille Ferronnerie
Rue de la Vieille Draperie
Rue de la Vieille Monnaie
Rue de la Vieille Halle aux Bleds
Rue de la Vieille Tannerie
Rue de la Vieille Bouclerie
Rue de la Vieille Lanterne
Rue de la Vieille Pelleterie
Rue de la Vieille Ferraille
Rue de la Vieille Boucherie
Rue de la Vieille Poterie
Rue de la Vieille Corderie
Rue de la Vieille Tuilerie
Rue de la Vieille Verrerie
Rue de la Vieille Fripperie
Rue de la Vieille Orfèvrerie

INDEX

Acton, Lord, 83, 143
Alsace, 137, 139, 159, 195
America, 4, 24
Amsterdam, 233
Argonne, 167
Aristotle, 11
Artois, Count of, 57, 63, 67, 101, 119, 121
Assignats, 104–7, 211

Bailly, 50, 53, 81, 89, 133
Barentin, 43, 48
Barnave, 80, 123–24, 130, 133–35, 143, 171, 190
Bastille, 56, 63 et seq., 89, 97, 99, 101, 108
Belloc, Mr., 122
Bonaparte, 81, 155, 176, 196. *See* Napoleon
Bonchamp, 198–99
Bouillé, 90, 121–22
Breton Club, 60–61, 110
Brézé, Mercure de, 49, 50, 53
Brissot, 134, 140–43, 171, 178, 217
Brunswick, 153, 163, 168
Burke, 13, 68, 177

Calonne, 37, 67, 102, 119, 121
Capitalism, 3–5, 14, 15, 25–27, 59, 107, 179, 180, 212
Carnot, 194–95, 210, 222, 226
Carrier, 224, 226
Cathelineau, 198
Cazalès, 79, 87
Champ de Mars, 108, 125
Charette, 197, 199
Chatillon, 198
Chaumette, 218–19
Chauvelin, 178
Cholet, 199
Clergy, Civil Constitution of, 104–5, 110, 129, 147, 182
Coblentz, 119, 120, 139, 147
Committee of General Security, 202
of Public Safety, 184, 186, 191, 193, 202 et seq., 206–7, 221
Commune, 61, 155, 163, 171, 179, 184–86, 215
Condorcet, 134, 170, 206, 217
Constituent Assembly, 75 et seq., 129, 133
Constitution of 1791: 76–77, 97 et seq., 111, 127 et seq., 140, 151, 153, 160, 170, 190
of 1793: 206–7, 231
of 1795: 232
Contract, The Social, 9, 10, 77
Convention, 170 et seq.
Corday, Charlotte, 208–9
Cordeliers, 89, 124, 171, 220
Cordelier, The Old, 222
Corn, 21–22, 39, 59
Count Mirabeau's Letters to his Constituents, 86
Couthon, 222

Danton, 89, 91, 124–26, 133, 153, 155–58, 160–66, 169, 171–73, 183–84, 187, 191, 202 et seq., 215, 219 et seq.
Dauphiné, 38, 51, 69
Delaunay, 63–66
D'Elbée, 198–99
Delessart, 141
Departments, 83, 105, 129
Desmoulins, Camille, 63, 86, 89, 180, 220, 222–23

Diderot, 12
Districts (of Paris), 148, 150
Drouet, 122
Dumouriez, 142–43, 177, 180
Duport, 80, 117, 123, 134
Durfort, 121

Elliott, Hugh, 137
Emigrés, 67, 99, 108, 119, 138, 141, 146, 153

Feast of the Federation, 108–9, 151–53
  of Reason, 219, 225
  of the Supreme Being, 225
Fédérés, 151–53
Fénelon, 11
Feudalism, 20, 72, 128, 137, 180, 182
Feuillants, 125, 132, 134–35, 140–47, 151, 166, 171, 190
Flesselles, 63, 65
Fleurus, 232
Fouché, 200
Foulon, 89
Fouquier-Tinville, 231
Fox, Charles James, 68
Francis, Emperor, 143
Friend of the People, 86

Gabelle, 21–22
Girondists, 133, 140–41, 146–47, 151, 161, 166, 174–75, 199, 206
Grégoire, Bishop, 219
Guadet, 217

Hammond, Mr., 162
Hanriot, 187
Hébert, 155, 213, 215, 218 et seq.
Herbois, Collot d', 227
Hoche, 195
Hondschoote, 194
Hood, Admiral, 193, 196, 200
Hôtel de Ville, 55, 60–61, 63, 65–66, 91–92, 155, 163, 228
Houchard, 194
Hugo, Victor, 209
Hume, David, 3, 17

India, 4
Isle, Rouget de l', 154
Isnard, 134, 185

Jacobins, 60, 110, 113, 116, 215, 220, 226, 237
Jemappes, 174, 180
Jourdan, 194
Journal des Etats Généraux, 85
Journalism, 85 et seq.

Kaiserslautern, 195
Kaunitz, 140
Kellermann, 168
Kléber, 199

Lafayette, 89, 92–96, 115, 123, 133, 141, 146, 153, 159, 167
La Marck, 114–15
Lameth, 80, 117, 123, 134
Landau, 195
Larochejaquelin, 198–99
Law of the Forty Halfpence, 211–12
  of the Maximum, 185–211
  of Prairial, 225–26
  of Suspects, 211–13
Legislative, The, 132, 148
Le Mans, 199
Leopold, Emperor, 138–39, 143
Locke, 11
Longwy, 163–64, 167
Louis XIV, 3, 7, 11, 97, 109
Louis XV, 18, 21, 28
Louis XVI, 15, 21, 29, 32–34, 47–48, 53–54, 58–59, 65, 71–73, 79, 87, 91, 98, 102, 122, 135, 145, 151–57, 176
Loustallot, 86
Louvain, 181
Louvre, 55
Luçon, 191
Lyons, 70, 183, 199, 200, 225

Maestricht, 181
Maillard, 92–93
Mainz, 193, 195
Mandat, 155
Marat, 86, 91, 126, 133, 171–74, 185, 191, 207 et seq.
Maret, 178, 216
Marie Antoinette, 30, 48, 51, 57, 68, 72–73, 87–88, 91–98, 102, 115–19, 123, 135, 138, 143, 152, 156, 215–16
Marseillaise hymn, 154
Martial Law, 100
Maubeuge, 187, 194–95
Maurepas, 33
Maury, 78, 87–88
Mercy, Count, 116
Mirabeau, 53, 59, 60, 81–85, 94, 106, 110 et seq., 119, 123, 137
Mons, 194–95
Montesquieu, 12
Mounier, 51, 79, 94, 99, 123
Mountain, The, 172, 174–75, 184, 191, 213

Nantes, 182
Napoléon, 237. *See also* Bonaparte
Narbonne, Louis de, 141, 159
National Assembly, 46–47, 52, 75
National Guard, 61, 64–66, 71, 89, 93–96, 108, 110, 111, 122, 128, 130, 187
Necker, 29, 39, 42, 48, 58, 63, 67, 95, 101–2, 106, 112–13
Neerwinden, 181
Nootka Sound, 136
Notables, 37

Orleans, Duke of, 44, 56–57, 81

Palais Royal, 56, 58, 62
Paris, topography of, 55
Parlement de Paris, 30
Pétion, 79, 152
Pichegru, 195
Pilnitz, 139–41
Pitt, 110, 136–37, 177–78
Poland, 138
Polignac, Duchess of, 67
Provence, Count of, 57, 114
Provinces, 21, 81
Prussia, 139, 144, 169

Rationalism, 11, 13
Rebecqui, 200
Reformation, Protestant, 11, 137
Reichenbach, Conference at, 139
Revolutionary Tribunal, 183–86
Revolutions of Paris and Brabant, 86, 180
Rights of Man, 76–78, 81, 127, 140
Robespierre, 79, 88, 133, 147, 153–54, 171, 183, 191, 207 et seq., 219 et seq.
Roederer, 156
Roland, 142, 151, 160–65, 171–73, 217
Roland, Madame, 142, 151, 161, 165–66, 217
Rousseau, 2, 9, 14, 25, 77, 149

St. Cloud, 119, 121
St. Just, 195, 210, 222, 227
San Domingo, 233
Sardinia, 144
Saumur, 198
Savernay, 199
Saxe-Coburg, Duke of, 181, 193–94
Schoolmen, 11
Sections of Paris, 149
Sieyès, 41, 45–46, 54, 80–81, 100, 134, 232
Smith, Adam, 13, 17, 31
States-General, 5, 8, 24, 38, 40 et seq.
Stofflet, 198
Strasbourg, 70–73

Talleyrand, 104–5, 108, 144
Tallien, 155, 224, 226–27
Taxes, 4, 5, 32–33, 37, 69, 71
Tennis-Court Oath, 52, 152
Terror, The, 205 et seq., 229
Thermidor, 227

Thermidorians, 232
Third Estate, 40, 47, 49, 54, 58, 103
Toulon, 193, 196, 200
Toulouse, Archbishop of, 37
Tourcoing, 232
Trèves, 139
Tuileries, 17, 96, 98, 119, 145 et seq.
Turgot, 13, 30–34, 36, 102
Twelve, Committee of, 185–88

Valenciennes, 181, 187, 193
Valmy, 167 et seq.
Varennes, flight to, 119 et seq., 130, 138–39
Vendée, Insurrection in, 182, 193, 197 et seq.
Vendémiaire, 232
Verdun, 163, 167
Vergniaud, 134, 154, 166, 187
Veto, 80, 82–83, 113, 128, 151
Voltaire, 2, 12, 13, 14, 17, 25, 34

Walpole, Horace, 17
Watteau, 16
Wattignies, 195
Weissenbourg, 195
Westermann, 198
Westphalia, 137
William III, 3
Wurmser, 195

York, Duke of, 194
Young, Arthur, 18, 56–57, 67, 69 et seq., 72–73, 90

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